

DISSERTATIONS,
CHRONOLOGICAL,
HISTORICAL, AND CRITICAL,
ON ALL THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT;
THROUGH WHICH ARE INTERSPERSED,
REFLECTIONS,
THEOLOGICAL, AND MORAL,
ARISING FROM THE VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

By JOHN BAIRD, D.D.

D U B L I N :
PRINTED BY R. STEWART, No. 200, ABBEY-STREET.

M,DCC,LXXVIII.

DISSERTATIONS

CHRONOLOGICAL

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL

ON ALL THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THROUGH WHICH ARE INTERFERRED

REFLECTIONS

THEOLOGICAL AND MORAL

ARISING FROM OUR SUBJECTS



BY JOHN BAIRD, D.D.

DUBLIN

PRINTED BY R. S. WALTON, IN THE ROYAL EXCHANGE

MDCCLXXIII

iv
of the Christian Church, and an Ornament
to Religion:—Great and solid Merit, al-
ways Abounding, and never failing, Way
to the Best Affections, and never failing, Way
Lord, to draw Truth from Truth, or to
Discern and Accept, every true Instruction.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
J A M E S,

Lord Bishop of DOWN and CONNOR.

MY LORD,

THE Order of Bishops, next to Kings
and Sovereign Princes, unquestionably Claims
the Patronage of all Writings, which Display
and Vindicate the Power, the Justice, the
Wisdom, and Grace of Almighty God.
This, whatever my Success may have been,
in the Execution of the Design, was my con-
stant Aim, in the Performance now Offered
to Public View. And, as the Desire of that
Order has always Appeared no less Ready
and Strong, than the Right was Evident,
and the Duty Binding, to Encourage Works
of this Sort; to whom shall I, an Unknown
Author, Look up for Sanction to those Glo-
rious Doctrines, but to a Truly Apostolic and
Primitive PRELATE, who, by Divine Per-
mission, hath been Raised up to be a FATHER

of the Christian Church, and an ORNAMENT to Religion?—Great and Solid Merit, always Abhorring Adulation, Forces its Way to the Best Affections, and never Fails, my Lord, to Draw a Tribute from Truth; or to Discern, and Accept, every filial Intention.

To your Lordship, therefore, with the Utmost Diffidence, I Assume the Privilege and Honor of DEDICATING the Following Dissertations: And beg the Liberty of Declaring myself

Your Lordship's

Most Dutiful,

Most Obedient, and

Most Humble

Son and Servant,

Mary's-abbey.

Nov: 12th, 1777.

JOHN BAIRD.



PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

THESSE Dissertations, following the orderly method of holy writ, begin with the ground-work of original or universal religion, particularly the creation of all nature, by one holy, and good, and wise being, the works of whose hands therein were, in truth, the several objects which the heathens worshipped as divinities. They proceed to the introduction of sin by the fall of our first parents, of which we experience the wretched effects. They go on to that amazing punishment of its increase, the general deluge, proved to be as certain, as it was wonderful, by the remaining traces of it throughout the globe. They then recite the second peopling of the world, the relapse of mankind into wickedness, through the grossest idolatry; the origin of the patriarchal religion; and the choice of one family and people, to preserve the knowledge of God, and to be *as a light shining in a dark place*, for the benefit of all about them, who were disposed to receive direction for their steps. They lay before readers the most extraordinary providences and events, previous to the laws delivered to the Jewish people; and, finally, the glorious promulgation of *the ten commandments* on Mount Sinai, by

by the Almighty himself. And, through the whole, human, or profane history is copiously interspersed, chiefly respecting the moral and religious, the wise and magnanimous characters and actions of the most remarkable persons, who supply the world with admirable patterns of all kinds of virtue.

CONSEQUENTLY, no more of the holy scriptures has been taken under consideration, than from the beginning of Genesis to the twentieth chapter of Exodus. This, indeed, is not agreeable to the original design; which was to comprehend within one volume, of this size, DISSERTATIONS on all the Five Books of Moses; and which, by the proposals for printing the work, subscribers would expect. But, rather than pursue this plan, the author, afterward, resolved to adopt another, convinced that his friends would be perfectly satisfied with the reasons, of this resolution, which he had to offer. Here he will be allowed to give some general account of the origin and progress of the work.

WITHOUT the least view to a publication, many of these Discourses were, at different periods, in the form of lectures, on Sunday evenings, delivered to a certain sort of people, whose temper and behaviour, in general, must, necessarily, render it very uncomfortable and dangerous to preside over them, in religious affairs. The author, however, persevering in his labours, notwithstanding their indifference about the revival of truths that had been long buried in oblivion among them, proposed to himself, after some time, the pleasure of presenting the same discourses to the world; and received the kindest encouragement and

P R E F A C E.

vii

and assistance from many who had heard them. But, through the whole course, having adapted them to the weakest conceptions, that they might be the more useful, he found, that many other matters, with illustrations and proofs, might be pleasing and necessary to the enlightened reader; and, accordingly, several whole DISSERTATIONS have been composed and inserted in their proper places, since the first sheets of the manuscript went to the press. By these additions, the work was so insensibly swelled, that, while heaps of papers, belonging to the subsequent parts of it, still remained in the author's hands, the charge of upwards of sixty pages, more than the price of the book would afford, has been incurred, to bring the sacred history down to a distinguished period. If such additions had been left out, and the first scheme pursued, instead of the present title, *Select Dissertations* would have better suited the performance; and subscribers and purchasers must have been disappointed and injured. The author, therefore, begs the public may, at least, excuse his conduct, if they should not applaud his justice.

He hopes, also, that the extension of his plan, signified in the title-page, which is changed from *Dissertations, &c. on the Five Books of Moses*, to *Dissertations, &c. on all the Books of the Old Testament*, will be so far from giving offence to any, that even such as may think they have been injured, in the first instance, will consider the laborious task, which the author has prescribed to himself, as a sufficient atonement for it; while others, who desire farther information concerning the most important matters, will encourage his confident reliance on them, in an undertaking

undertaking that depends entirely on their approbation, which, after a short respite, they may be requested to give, by their subscription for a second volume.

THE benevolence and utility of such a design will appear evident to every one who reflects, that though learned men have, with great piety and diligence, employed their various talents in making the holy scriptures plain and useful, yet many of their writings have been, necessarily, locked up in *dead or foreign* languages; that those in our own tongue, which deserve, and have gained, universal esteem, are extremely voluminous and costly; and, as one cause of their bulk, have incorporated in them a vast mixture of ancient and scholastic erudition, which is equally uninteresting and perplexing to the most of ordinary readers.—Pure annals of religion, or of the periodical revelations of God's will and grace to mankind, in the several ages of the world, well digested, would obviate some difficulties apprehended to be in the scheme, and assist the serious enquirer in connecting the whole together, within a very narrow compass. To give this brief, but at the same time compleat and distinct history of religion, if the expression may be used, was the intention of the author, in the present work. The omission of some small matters, was considered of no moment; as they appear to be only episodes in the sacred writer's plan, which have no immediate connection with it: Though even from these, the pious reader of the scriptures will please to be informed, that, as *R. Maimonides* observes, on the affair of Judah and Tamar itself, in the xxxviii chapter of Genesis, the most striking lessons

lessons of modesty, justice, and ingenuity of mind, may be deduced.

BECAUSE those writings claim a divine origin, and the whole of this performance is considerably qualified with ingredients taken from them, surely none, even in this age, who have their taste, in the lowest degree, unvitiated, and have preserved any regard for the reputation of their understanding, will either inwardly entertain, or outwardly shew, any dislike to the subject. The most certain sign of a defective education, or of perversion and depravity of principle, is a neglect or contempt of writings tinctured with morality and religion. Rather than refuse instruction therein, a modest suspicion would be more becoming, that farther information and evidence are still wanting. The accumulated knowledge of mankind, and their uninterrupted and voluntary testimony, ought, certainly, to be respected.

WITH what pains the many authorities quoted through this work, as supplemental, elucidative, or probatory of the sacred writings, have been collected, the learned are best able to judge. It would, perhaps, be imprudent to reveal the difficulties attending the task. The author complained of none while he was engaged in it: The pleasure he had, in the laborious search, and in seeing, with his own eyes, the works of illustrious men, was felt to be a sufficient counterballance. His own private collection of books was far from supplying him with all the materials he has used. The truly noble and benevolent Earl of CHARLEMONT, whose library is a compleat

compleat *Encyclopædy*, gave him the freest admittance to it; and from thence he drew what he could not easily find any where else. To some booksellers, and Librarians, he is, likewise, under obligations, which he here acknowledges, with the utmost gratitude.

Of the imperfections of the design, and the inaccuracies in the execution, of what he has given of it, the author is highly sensible. Many were the reasons for these; more, perhaps, than ever concurred, when a work of this extent was concerted, and carried on. The death of a dear wife, whose memory he wishes he could render immortal, immediately preceded; and there followed, together with the utmost disrespect of her, the most virulent persecution of the author, already overwhelmed by afflictions, with two affectionate infants, by men who are enemies to every system of policy and religion;—to the latter, a disgrace and scandal.

BUT, leaving them in their own ways at present, or, rather, to their own consciences, if they may have any in future, the author sincerely prays, that they may receive benefit from what he has now done, before they stand at the righteous tribunal of God; and that all readers, overlooking errors, may derive instruction, direction, and comfort, equal to the dignity and importance of the subject.

P. S. THE author following no authorities, and reckoning it perfectly indifferent, has spelled those words, which formerly imitated the French orthography, and, of late, the Latin, with and without an *u*, just as it occurred.

S U B-

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

A
MRS. Agnew
 Doctor Achmet
 Mr. Humphry Adams
 Mr. Archibald Armstrong
 Mr. Peter Alley
 Mr. Hugh Auchinleck
 Mr. James Acheson
 Mr. William Andrews

B
 Rev. Dean Bond
 Mrs. Bunbury
 Mrs. Catharine Brazill
 Miss Anne Eickerstaff
 Mr. Robert Black
 Mr. Thomas Black
 Richard Bolton, Esq;
 Mr. John Bones
 Mr. Nugent Booker
 Mr. Gilbert Bigger
 Mr. Humphry Barber
 Thomas Bayly, Esq;

Mr. James Brown
 Mr. James Ballentine
 Rev. Mr. Blair
 Mr. Thomas Bond, 2 books
 Edward William Burton,
 Esq;
 Thomas Bond, of Bonds
 Glen, Esq;
 Mr. Alexander Boyd
 Mr. Thomas Bond
 Mr. Alexander Boyle
 Henry Vaughan Brooke,
 Esq;
 Mr. Alexander Poyle
 Mr. John Barclay
 Mr. William Bond
 Mr. George Burnet
 Mr. Burrowes, Sen.
 Mr. Robert Burrowes, T.
 C. D. 2 Books
 Mr. Thomas Brunker
 Mr. Oliver Bond
 Mr. John Batchelor

Right

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

C

Right Hon. Lady Clifden
 Mrs. Elizabeth Clark
 Mrs. Cowan
 Right Hon. Earl of Charle-
 mont
 Rev. William Cradock,
 D. D. D. S. P. D.
 Capt. Robert Clark
 Thomas Cowan, Esq;
 Mr. John Carey
 Mr. James Clark
 Mr. John Carleton
 Mr. Thomas Craig
 Mr. Hugh Combes
 Mr. David Corbett
 Mr. Hugh Cochrane
 Mr. John Cowan
 Rev. Henry Corbett
 Mr. George Cole
 Mr. John Crawford
 John Christian, L. L. D.
 Guy Moore Coote, Esq;
 M. P.
 Rev. William Craig
 Charles Croker, Esq;
 Mr. Thomas Carpenter
 Mr. Charles Curtis
 Mr. William Crossie
 William Cleghorn, Esq;
 George Cary, Esq;
 Mr. Thomas Chambers
 Richard Cowan, Esq;
 John Cowan, Esq;
 William Cowan, Esq;
 Mr. John Campbell
 Mr. David Cowan
 Peter Cantwell, Esq;

Anthony Coane, Esq;
 Tristram Cary, Esq;
 George Cary, of Castle
 Cary, Esq;
 Henry Cope, Esq;
 Henry Boyle Carter, Esq;
 Thomas Croker, Esq;
 Henry Clarke, Esq;
 Mr. James Cullen
 Mr. James Carfan T. C. D.
 D.

Mrs. Deane
 Mrs. Esther Decluzeau
 Mrs. Drew
 Miss Dodd
 William Deane, Esq;
 John Damer, Esq;
 George Purdon Drew, Esq;
 Mr. Christopher D'Arcy
 Mr. Peter D'Arcy
 James Dunkin, Esq;
 Rev. Mr. Dunn
 Mr. James Daniel
 Mr. Arthur Dunn
 Mr. Arthur Donellan
 Mr. James Dickson,
 E.

Mrs. Ellis
 Mr. Pat. Ewing
 Mr. Joshua Dawson
 F.

Miss Freind
 John Farrell, M. D.
 Mr. David Forrest
 John Finlay, Esq;
 Faithful Fortescue, Esq;
 Richard Fleming, Esq;
 Mr. Zach. Foxall

Mr. Edward



SUBSCRIBERS NAMES

Mr. Edward Fergusson

Mr. James Given

Mr. James Given, Jun.

Mrs. Gough

Mr. Benjamin Gault

Mess. John and Charles

Gault

Fortescue Gorman, Esq;

Rev. Edward Golding

Mr. Grundy

Mr. Robert Gibson

Mr. John Gillespie

Mr. Robert Given

Mr. John Gamble

Mr. Roger Gordon

H.

George Hale, F. T. C. D.

Mr. Joshua Houston, the

Author's Friend.

Mr. John Houston

Mr. Henry Harping

Mr. Robert Henderfon

Rev. Dean Handcock

John Stewart Hamilton,

Esq; M. P.

William Hamilton, Esq;

Mr. Thomas Hamilton,

William Hudson, Esq;

Mr. John How

Mr. William Hunter

Col. Simon Hart, Esq;

Mr. James Haslett

Mr. Harper

Mr. Edward Hoey

Mr. William Hawthorn

Mr. Thomas Horan

Mr. James Hartley

Mr. Gilbert Hutchison

Mr. John Henderfon

Mr. Samuel Hutchison

Mr. Simon Hazelton

J.

Rev. Thomas Jameson

A. M.

Mr. Henry Jackson

Richard Jones, Esq;

Robert Johnston, Esq;

Rev. Jocelyn Ingram

Charles Johnston, Esq;

Mr. John Johnston

Mr. William Jordan

Mr. Wood Gibson Jones

Mr. James Jackson

Mr. John Jackson

K.

Mrs. Rachel Kilbee

Miss Margaret King

Sir Anthony King, Knt.

and Alderman

William Knox, Esq;

Mr. Gilbert Kilbee

Mr. Edward Kilbee, Jun.

Mr. William Kilbee

Mr. Luke Kelly

Mr. George Kerr

Samuel Croker King, Esq;

George Keys, Esq;

Charles King, Esq; M. P.

Mr. James King

William Knox, Esq;

Murray Kathrens, Esq;

Dennis

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p> Dennis Kelly, Esq;
 Mr. John King
 L.
 Rev. Dean Ledwich, D. D.
 Dean of Kildare
 Rev. Robert Law, D. D.
 Hugh Lyle, Esq;
 Thomas Lee, Esq;
 Mr. John Burjaud Lewis
 T. C. D.
 Rev. Charles Cobbe Lyn-
 don, A. B. 2 Books
 James Lyndon, Esq;
 Mr. Alexander Lawrence
 George Lowther, Esq;
 Mr. James Lowry
 Michael Lewis, Esq;
 Mr. James Lang
 Mr. James Loyde, 2 Books

 M.
 Mrs. M'Farland, Luttrels-
 town
 Mrs. Elizabeth Maffett
 James M'Rea, Esq; Capt.
 3d regt. of horse
 David M'Eride, M. D.
 Murdoch M'Kenzie, Esq;
 F. R. S.
 Mr. James Miller, T. C. D.
 Mr. William Makins
 Mr. Thomas M'Minn
 Mr. Charles Mulholen
 Mr. Donald M'Naughton
 Mr. George Murray
 Mr. Thomas M'Gowan
 Mr. Mullan </p> | <p> Mr. James M'Creery
 Mr. Medlicott, 3 Books
 Mr. John M'Connell
 Joshua M'Geough, Esq;
 William M'Geough, Esq;
 Bryan Meheux, Esq;
 Mr. George Melvin
 Rev. Mr. Morgan
 Rev. Alexander Marshall
 Rev. Oliver Miller
 Rev. Samuel Murphy
 Mr. Charles M'Clenaghan
 Mr. William M'Farland
 Rev. John M'Causland
 Andrew Makilwaine, Esq;
 Mr. Hamilton Moore
 Rev. Ralph Mansfield
 Rev. John M'Cleland,
 Coagh
 Mr. B. O. Mitchell
 Mr. Milbank
 Mr. Robert Mercer
 Malcolm M'Neill, Esq;
 Mr. Thomas Millwood
 Arthur M'Guyre, Esq;
 Samuel M'Geough, Esq;
 Mr. James Maxwell
 Mr. Robert Mack
 David Murray, Gent.
 Mr. James Medlicott
 Mr. Bartholomew Madden
 Mr. Peter Mazeire
 Mr. John M'Cloure
 Mr. Robert Moore
 — M'Cann, Merchant

 N.
 Archibald Nevins, Esq;
 Mrs. Norton </p> |
|---|---|

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mrs. Norton
Mrs. Margaret Nash
Mr. William Neill

Mr. David Oram
Mr. George Overend
Mr. John Orr
Charles Oulton, Esq;

Miss Palmer
Mr. John Pooler
Mr. Robert Percival, A. B.

T. C. D.
Mr. Panniel
Mr. Thomas Porter
Henry Palmer, Esq;
Mr. Samuel Prentice
Mr. Thomas Pearse
Mr. James Peebles
Mr. James Prentice

R.

Mr. John Ruffel
Mr. James Riky
George Robison, Esq;
Mr. James Roulle
John Rea, Esq;
Mr. William Rofs
Mrs. Catherine Rudd
Mr. Robert Roth
Mr. John Reid,
Mr. John Rambaut

S.

Sir Richard Steele, Bart.

Benjamin Shafton, M. D.
the Author's Friend

Mark Sinnot, Esq;
Walter Sinnot, Esq;
Rev. Alexander Staples,
A. M.
Mr. John Stewart
Mr. Thomas Shaw
Mr. Alexander Simphon
Benjamin Span, Esq;

Mr. Arthur Stanley
Rev. Abraham Seawright
Thomas Short, Esq;
Mr. James Stevenson
James Sheil, Esq;
Mr. Robert Sproule
Rev. Nicholas Spence
Mr. James Sproule
Rev. Lewis John Scofield
Mr. John Smith
John Spourling, Esq;
Mr. William Speer
Mr. James Savage
Mr. Joseph Slator
Mr. Richard Stewart

T.

Robert Thorpe, Esq;
William John Talbot, Esq;
John Traill, Esq;
Mr. Francis Thome
Mrs. Travers
Mr. George Thompson
Mr. John Thompson
Rev. Mr. Thomas
Mrs. Elinor Tonge
Mr. Rofs Thompson
Mr. Thomas Taylor
Mr. Thomas

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES.

Mr. Thomas Travers

Mr. Peter Travers

Mr. John Taubman

V.

Mr. George Vernon, T.

C. D.

Mr. Robert Vickers

Mr. James Vance.

U.

Mr. James Underwood.

W.

Mrs. Jane Wright

Mrs. Warren

John Jervis White, Esq;

Rev. Isaac Weld, D. D.

John White, Esq;

Mr. Stafford Wilson

Mr. George Wilson

Mr. Alexander Wallace

Mr. Woods

Mr. Francis Welsh

Mr. Robert Wallace

Rev. Brabazon Wye

James Whitelaw, Esq;

Mr. Lawrence Ward

Rev. William Weir

Rev. John White, Stew-

artstown

Mr. Charles Williams

Mr. Richard Williams

Mr John Wright

Mr. Archibald Wright

Mr. Mathew Walsh

Mr. Richard Williamson

Mr. Thomas Woods

Mr. James Walmsley

Mr. Edward Williamson

Y

Alexander Young, Esq;

CONTENTS.



CONTENTS.

Differt.	Gen. page.
I. <i>Of the Creation of the World.</i>	i. 1
II. <i>Of the Creation of Man.</i>	i, ii. 26
III. <i>Of Paradise.</i>	ii. 40
IV. <i>Of the Institution of Marriage.</i>	ii. 54
V. <i>Of the Institution of the Sabbath.</i>	ii. 69.
VI. <i>Of a State of Trial ; and the Fall of Man.</i>	iii. 83
VII. <i>Of the Consequences of the Fall.</i>	iii. 99
VIII. <i>Of the Murder of Abel ; and Cain's Curse.</i>	iv. 134
IX. <i>Of the Institution of Sacrifices.</i>	iv. 147
X. <i>Of the Translation of Enoch.</i>	iv. 165
XI. <i>Of the Genealogy from Adam to Noah.</i>	v. 176
XII. <i>Of the general Corruption of Mankind.</i>	vi. 184
XIII. <i>Of the Flood.</i>	vi, vii. 200
XIV. <i>Of Noah's coming out of the Ark, and offering sacrifice, &c.</i>	viii. 225
XV. <i>Of the Tower of Babel ; and Confusion of Tongues.</i>	xi. 250
XVI. <i>Of the first Colonies, or Nations, after the Flood.</i>	x, xi. 265
XVII. <i>Of Divine Appearances.</i>	xii. 270
b	XVIII. <i>Of</i>

Differt.	Gen. Page.
XVIII. <i>Of the Corruption of the World, preceding the Birth of Abraham.</i>	xii. 284
XIX. <i>Of the Political, Religious, and Moral State of the Eastern Regions, about the Time Abraham was Called.</i>	xiv, xviii. 293
XX. <i>Of the Birth of Isaac; and the Promises made to his Seed.</i>	xxi. 306
XXI. <i>Of the Trial of Abraham's Faith, in Regard to Isaac; and Sarah's Death.</i>	xxii, xxiii. 318
XXII. <i>Of Eliezer's Journey to Haran, and Return with Rebecca.</i>	xxiv. 323
XXIII. <i>Of the Death and Burial of Abraham.</i>	xxv. 334
XXIV. <i>Isaac Deceived by Rebecca and Jacob, who Obtains the Blessing.</i>	xxvii. 340
XXV. <i>Of Jacob's Journey to Haran, and Servitude there.</i>	xxviii. 350
XXVI. <i>Of Jacob's Love for Joseph; and his Brethren's Hatred.</i>	xxxvii, &c. 361
XXVII. <i>Continuation of Joseph's History, till the Arrival of the ten Patriarchs in Egypt.</i>	xxxix, &c. 371
XXVIII. <i>Of Joseph's Behaviour to his Brethren; and their Return to Canaan.</i>	xlii. 380
XXIX. <i>Of Joseph's making himself Known to his Brethren; and Jacob's Descent into Egypt.</i>	xlvi. 388
XXX. <i>Of Jacob's Prophetic Benedictions; and Death.</i>	xlvi, &c. 399
XXXI. <i>Of</i>	



C O N T E N T S. xix

Dissert.	Exod. Page.
XXXI. <i>Of the State and Policy of Egypt after the Death of Jacob; and the Birth of Moses.</i>	i, ii. 408
XXXII. <i>Sketches of the Life of Moses, for eighty Years.</i>	ii, iii. 419
XXXIII. <i>Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh; and bring Plagues upon Egypt.</i>	v, &c. 427
XXXIV. <i>Of the Institution of the Pass-over; and the Israelites borrowing of their Neighbours the Egyptians.</i>	xi, xii. 445
XXXV. <i>Of the Departure of the Israelites from Egypt; and Passage through the Red-Sea.</i>	xii, &c. 457
XXXVI. <i>Of the Israelites wanting Water in the Wilderness of Shur; that of Marah made Sweet; Quails and Manna Cover their Camp.</i>	xv, xvi. 478
XXXVII. <i>Of the Murmuring for Water at Rephidim; War with Amalek; and the Salutation and Counsel of Jethro.</i>	xvii, xviii. 495
XXXVIII. <i>Of the Encampment at Sinai; and the Sanctification of the Israelites, previous to the giving of the Law.</i>	xix. 509
XXXIX. <i>Of the giving of the Law on Sinai.</i>	xix, xx. 516
XL. <i>Reflections on the Foregoing Dissertation.</i>	525

2 Т И Э Т И О С

Page 10

XXI. Of the Similitude of Error.

June 10th 1891

the British Empire

222. Summary of the 1st of 1914.

Q14 III II

1900

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1944

11

7

1990

XXV. Of the Properties of the Heart.

1971 1972

1943-1944



100-443887-100

100

1955-1956, 1957-1958, 1959-1960, 1961-1962, 1963-1964, 1965-1966, 1967-1968, 1969-1970, 1971-1972, 1973-1974, 1975-1976, 1977-1978, 1979-1980, 1981-1982, 1983-1984, 1985-1986, 1987-1988, 1989-1990, 1991-1992, 1993-1994, 1995-1996, 1997-1998, 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2003-2004, 2005-2006, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2019-2020, 2021-2022, 2023-2024, 2025-2026, 2027-2028, 2029-2030, 2031-2032, 2033-2034, 2035-2036, 2037-2038, 2039-2040, 2041-2042, 2043-2044, 2045-2046, 2047-2048, 2049-2050, 2051-2052, 2053-2054, 2055-2056, 2057-2058, 2059-2060, 2061-2062, 2063-2064, 2065-2066, 2067-2068, 2069-2070, 2071-2072, 2073-2074, 2075-2076, 2077-2078, 2079-2080, 2081-2082, 2083-2084, 2085-2086, 2087-2088, 2089-2090, 2091-2092, 2093-2094, 2095-2096, 2097-2098, 2099-2100, 2101-2102, 2103-2104, 2105-2106, 2107-2108, 2109-2110, 2111-2112, 2113-2114, 2115-2116, 2117-2118, 2119-2120, 2121-2122, 2123-2124, 2125-2126, 2127-2128, 2129-2130, 2131-2132, 2133-2134, 2135-2136, 2137-2138, 2139-2140, 2141-2142, 2143-2144, 2145-2146, 2147-2148, 2149-2150, 2151-2152, 2153-2154, 2155-2156, 2157-2158, 2159-2160, 2161-2162, 2163-2164, 2165-2166, 2167-2168, 2169-2170, 2171-2172, 2173-2174, 2175-2176, 2177-2178, 2179-2180, 2181-2182, 2183-2184, 2185-2186, 2187-2188, 2189-2190, 2191-2192, 2193-2194, 2195-2196, 2197-2198, 2199-2200, 2201-2202, 2203-2204, 2205-2206, 2207-2208, 2209-2210, 2211-2212, 2213-2214, 2215-2216, 2217-2218, 2219-2220, 2221-2222, 2223-2224, 2225-2226, 2227-2228, 2229-2230, 2231-2232, 2233-2234, 2235-2236, 2237-2238, 2239-2240, 2241-2242, 2243-2244, 2245-2246, 2247-2248, 2249-2250, 2251-2252, 2253-2254, 2255-2256, 2257-2258, 2259-2260, 2261-2262, 2263-2264, 2265-2266, 2267-2268, 2269-2270, 2271-2272, 2273-2274, 2275-2276, 2277-2278, 2279-2280, 2281-2282, 2283-2284, 2285-2286, 2287-2288, 2289-2290, 2291-2292, 2293-2294, 2295-2296, 2297-2298, 2299-2300, 2301-2302, 2303-2304, 2305-2306, 2307-2308, 2309-2310, 2311-2312, 2313-2314, 2315-2316, 2317-2318, 2319-2320, 2321-2322, 2323-2324, 2325-2326, 2327-2328, 2329-2330, 2331-2332, 2333-2334, 2335-2336, 2337-2338, 2339-2340, 2341-2342, 2343-2344, 2345-2346, 2347-2348, 2349-2350, 2351-2352, 2353-2354, 2355-2356, 2357-2358, 2359-2360, 2361-2362, 2363-2364, 2365-2366, 2367-2368, 2369-2370, 2371-2372, 2373-2374, 2375-2376, 2377-2378, 2379-2380, 2381-2382, 2383-2384, 2385-2386, 2387-2388, 2389-2390, 2391-2392, 2393-2394, 2395-2396, 2397-2398, 2399-2400, 2401-2402, 2403-2404, 2405-2406, 2407-2408, 2409-2410, 2411-2412, 2413-2414, 2415-2416, 2417-2418, 2419-2420, 2421-2422, 2423-2424, 2425-2426, 2427-2428, 2429-2430, 2431-2432, 2433-2434, 2435-2436, 2437-2438, 2439-2440, 2441-2442, 2443-2444, 2445-2446, 2447-2448, 2449-2450, 2451-2452, 2453-2454, 2455-2456, 2457-2458, 2459-2460, 2461-2462, 2463-2464, 2465-2466, 2467-2468, 2469-2470, 2471-2472, 2473-2474, 2475-2476, 2477-2478, 2479-2480, 2481-2482, 2483-2484, 2485-2486, 2487-2488, 2489-2490, 2491-2492, 2493-2494, 2495-2496, 2497-2498, 2499-2500, 2501-2502, 2503-2504, 2505-2506, 2507-2508, 2509-2510, 2511-2512, 2513-2514, 2515-2516, 2517-2518, 2519-2520, 2521-2522, 2523-2524, 2525-2526, 2527-2528, 2529-2530, 2531-2532, 2533-2534, 2535-2536, 2537-2538, 2539-2540, 2541-2542, 2543-2544, 2545-2546, 2547-2548, 2549-2550, 2551-2552, 2553-2554, 2555-2556, 2557-2558, 2559-2560, 2561-2562, 2563-2564, 2565-2566, 2567-2568, 2569-2570, 2571-2572, 2573-2574, 2575-2576, 2577-2578, 2579-2580, 2581-2582, 2583-2584, 2585-2586, 2587-2588, 2589-2590, 2591-2592, 2593-2594, 2595-2596, 2597-2598, 2599-2600, 2601-2602, 2603-2604, 2605-2606, 2607-2608, 2609-2610, 2611-2612, 2613-2614, 2615-2616, 2617-2618, 2619-2620, 2621-2622, 2623-2624, 2625-2626, 2627-2628, 2629-2630, 2631-2632, 2633-2634, 2635-2636, 2637-2638, 2639-2640, 2641-2642, 2643-2644, 2645-2646, 2647-2648, 2649-2650, 2651-2652, 2653-2654, 2655-2656, 2657-2658, 2659-2660, 2661-2662, 2663-2664, 2665-2666, 2667-2668, 2669-2670, 2671-2672, 2673-2674, 2675-2676, 2677-2678, 2679-2680, 2681-2682, 2683-2684, 2685-2686, 2687-2688, 2689-2690, 2691-2692, 2693-2694, 2695-2696, 2697-2698, 26

1957

100

10

DISSERTATION I.

OF THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

GENESIS I.

IN the same order of holy writ, and as the matter itself requires, this work begins with the origin of things. The account given of it, by revelation, is very short, but comprehensive; and, independent of all other systems, calculated equally for people of every age and nation.

IN the beginning, says Moses, *God created the heavens and the earth.* To create, in strict language, is to bring things which were not, into a state of being, or out of nothing, into form and existence. Our conceptions of this amazing exertion of divine power and authority, may be assisted, if we suppose, that the original atoms, or first elements, were previously made, and next wrought up into very different shapes and sizes, in the substances which the all-wise Creator was pleased to compose. This operation implies no contradiction in itself; and, therefore, is possible. And that all things we see, or any way perceive with our senses, were, by some such process, produced and framed, the nature and aspect of things themselves testify, and the relation of the event before us declares.

[WHEN the mind is fully affected with this great idea, and *clearly sees the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and god-head, in the creation of the world**, the enquiry is unavoidable, *where is God my maker †*, and the maker of all these things? And the voice of reason, as well as the instruction of revelation, is still the same, *He goeth by us, though we see him not; he passeth on also, though we perceive him not ‡*.—Here then is the ground, and first principle of religious belief, and right practice—God is—the supreme uncaused cause—from whose will and act all other beings derive their existence, and upon whom they must continually depend for their support. Elohim, the potentate, and Jehovah, the Lord, who was, and is of himself, are the peculiar names given to him; and without something importing authority, immediately derived from him, or by way of derision to idols and false gods, never applied to any other, in the sacred tongue; thereby ascribing to him alone all power and perfection.]

INDEED, in what precise manner, out of the immense and inconceivable fulness of his own self-existence, he brought all things *in the beginning*, as by what settled laws, or direct agency, he still upholds them, we can neither explain nor comprehend. Several ancient authors, with the scattered fragments of tradition, have formed, not unpleasing hypotheses, concerning the generation and arrangement of matter; and many of the modern given the freest scope to their fancy. But of this most stupendous work of God, Moses is the only historian who speaks in a ra-

* Rom. i. 20.

† Job. xxxv.

‡ Job. ix.

tional and satisfactory manner; and from whom all other accounts of it, any way consistent, have been manifestly taken. To give all succeeding ages, just and affecting thoughts of that astonishing display of unoriginated excellence, so far as true religion was concerned, appears plainly to have been his design; and in such a way, that men's presumption should not be flattered, by the indulgence of a vain curiosity, about things which it is altogether unnecessary for them to know. And if the judgment of some should be supposed biased, in regard to his relation, by a kind of sacred reverence for his authority; it may be justly urged as an argument, of no inconsiderable weight, to establish the credit of the relation, that, so far as it proceeds, it does not in any degree, contradict the most accurate discoveries, which have been made in later ages, concerning the system of the universe, or any part of it.

THE heavens and the earth, mentioned by this inspired author, may be taken in a sense that comprehends all created nature, or all things visible and invisible. For, as a learned commentator observes*, if Maimonides† understood the matter aright, the Hebrew particle *eth*, put before both heaven and earth, signifies as

* Patrick, Gen. i. ver. 1.

† The words of this Rabbi, which his lordship hath not given, are in his *More Nevochim*, pa. ii. cap. 30. thus: "Quod autem hic te scire quoque refert, est et hoc, quod particula *eth*, quæ adhibetur, cum dicitur, et haschamajim veet haaretz (ut sapientes nostri in pluribus locis explicarunt) idem valeat quod *in* cum: ut sensus sit; Deum creasse cum Cœlis, quæcunque sunt in Cœlis, et cum terra, quæcunque sunt in terra."

Vide edit. Basil. 1629. in Ling. Lat. conversus a Joh. Buxt. filio.

much as *with*; and makes the sense to be this, "He created the heavens, with all things in the heavens; and the earth, with all things in the earth:" and likewise says, the famous Philo understood the first word of the chapter *, translated *in the beginning*, to have a respect to the order wherein things were created; or that God began his creation with the heavens, and then proceeded to the earth.

AND yet, in opposition to the Jewish interpreters, who have certainly sometimes insulted common sense, with their traditions, and glosses upon words, it hath been thought, by others, no way consequent from the description Moses gives, that he meant to say, the whole universe was created all together at once, or at the same period of time. *In the beginning*, say they, seems rather to imply, that when, at what time soever it might be, the world was created, it was by the wisdom and power of the eternal God only. Nor is this fundamental truth in the least affected, though the several parts of the universe may have been produced at different times; though God may still be creating new worlds in the immense regions of space, which is not at all improbable; or even have only changed the texture and qualities of the bodies within our sphere, according to the opinion of a certain philosopher †, who imagines that our earth, from its appearance, derived its last origin from fire; and that the greatest part of the other terrestrial matter was burnt, by that violent element, at the time Moses says, *light was divided from darkness*; when the orbs,

* Heb. *בְּרֵאשִׁית*.

† Leibnitz, in the acta Leipsic. under the title of *Protogæa*, 1683.

composed of it, had shined as fixed stars a long time before, and at length become opaque for want of combustibles. None of those notions invading the ground necessary to be maintained, in either way this truth may be established; that in the beginning of their existence, it is no matter when or how, God created, or does still create, and renew all things*. And the only doctrine Moses would inculcate, in his introduction to creation, most probably is this, that the whole universe had once, whether entire or separately, in the present, or any other state, a beginning; and not from necessity or chance, but from the sole power and agency of God †.

BUT instead of such excursions through the interminable fields of imagination, let us rather come closer to the subject, and observe, that the intention of revelation being only to instruct us concerning things within a certain limited compass of space and duration, it appears most reasonable to suppose this phrase, in the beginning, has a special reference to the time when our earth was created, and the bodies connected with it; seeing it's condition and appurtenances are so minutely described in this chapter ‡.

* This concession, being sufficiently large, may confound in fids, who have taken their advantage on every occasion; and triumphed, particularly, over a very extraordinary man, for having deduced ingeniously, though perhaps falsely, the knowledge of physics, and of the Christian mysteries, from Hebrew roots. Hutchinson.

† This was taught by Mercurius Trismegistus, by Zoroaster, Orpheus and Pindar, whom St. Aug. calls Summi Philosophi.

‡ Dr. Taylor's Scrip. Div.

Now,

6 DISSERTATION I.

Now, the matter produced by God's almighty word, whereof this earth was to be framed, was a chaos, *without form and void**, that is, shapeless, waste and useless; the constituent heterogeneous particles being all jumbled together, and essential darkness covering the whole deep. Then the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; exerted itself on this sevenfold gloom, and separated and reduced the various parts of the confused mass, to the beautiful order and harmony in which we now behold them.

OPINIONS about the spirit of God moving on the face of the waters, or the primary operations of the divine influence on the pulpy, uncompacted substance, of which the earth first appeared, have been variously supported and explained. That it could not be the influence of the sun, when as yet there was none to warm the ground, is clear and manifest†. Incubation, or brooding over an egg, a figure, not very distant from the truth, ascribed to the earth, was, in the earliest times, an idea very generally entertained‡; by which several Jewish writers understood the descent of an elemental wind, called, on account of its vehemence, the wind, or the spirit of God; in the same manner as whatever is great and powerful is, in scripture language, ascribed as proper and peculiar to him||: That the darkness, which lay upon the faces of the deep, being now put in motion, is styled spirit,

* Heb. *חור ובוה*.

† The sun did not appear till the fourth day after the work of creation began.

‡ Vide Patrick, under the article waters, and many others.

|| Vide Synop. Critic. Poli in Loco.

that

DISSERTATION I 7

that is, a moving air, or wind, is the exposition of the words by a late writer * before referred to. Nor can it be unobserved, that a celebrated commentator † rejects the notion of its being a wind; and yet makes no other distinction in the principle, than that it was a great wind, raised by the infinite wisdom and power of God, which made a vehement commotion, and mighty fermentation, *on the face of the waters*, or that fluid matter already mentioned, to separate the parts of it one from the another. While others have asserted that the active power of God, which now sustains and preserves the universe, did then form and distinguish matter, and communicate spirituality and natural motion, by giving heat, rarefaction, and subtilty to all its parts ‡.

SOME of these opinions, indeed, seem to have a foundation in nature; as an elemental, or even common wind itself, might produce mighty effects in this case; and serve the will of the creator, as an instrument, in the performance of his great design. A principle of this sort is found extremely efficacious, in reducing component parts to their proper places, and uncontroled operations; and in forming, at the

* Hutchinson's Moses's Principia, part I.

† Bishop Patrick in Loco.

‡ See Sir Walter Raleigh, B. 1st. page 6. fol. 1st edit. where, to support and illustrate his opinion, he quotes the words of Virgil:

Principio cælum ac terras, camposque liquentes,
Lucentemque globum Lunæ, titaniaque astra,
Spiritus intus alit: totamque infusa par artus,
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

Æneid. l. 8.

same

8 DISSERTATION I

same time, the cement or bond of union, between the several constituent particles*.

BUT there are many, on the other hand, who have concluded that this energy, which gave vital influence to matter, of itself inert, was the self same spirit which now works on the minds of men for their sanctification†: an opinion no way contradictory to our holy faith, but rather perfectly consistent with it.

FROM revelation, nothing, with any degree of certainty, can be drawn, but this; that the word in the Hebrew tongue‡ here translated wind, is the same as that used in the 1st verse of the 8th chapter, when things were to be restored to their former state after the flood. But whether this comparison of the texts, perhaps very seldom made, will assist us in the solution, either on philosophical or religious principles, must be left to every one's private judgment. If there should be an inclination to the side of piety, it cannot possibly do any harm.

HOWEVER it was, Moses, pursuing the consequence, that some plastic enlivening power was actually impressed, proceeds, without farther explanation, to inform us, that on the first day, and the first thing, after the production of the chaos, the element of light was called forth. And the sublimity of his language, on this occasion, has not escaped the observation of a

* See the sagacious Doctor Macbride's Properties of fixed Air. Essay II. p. 20.

† Vide Synop. Critic. Poli. in Loco.

‡ Heb. *ruach*.

celebrated critic*, in ancient times, who says, the legislator of the Jews, who was no ordinary man, having just and adequate notions of the greatness and power of the Deity, has at the beginning of his laws, expressed himself with all suitable dignity, in the following words, *God said, let there be light, and there was light* †.

THE work of the second day was the formation of air, called *the firmament*, or the widely expanded atmosphere, where the feathered fowls fly, and which is spread above, and all around the earth, comprehending meteors and clouds; which, condensed into liquid fountains, are the *waters* said to be *above the firmament*; or air, in contradistinction to the *waters* of the sea, and rivers, *which are under it* ‡.

ALMIGHTY power formed, on the third day, the element of water, by draining off the fluids of the chaos, and gathering them into reservoirs and cavities to contain them; that the earth might become one firm, compact, and fertile surface, and be in a fit condition to *bring forth grass, and herbs, and fruitful trees*, which he then commanded to spring.

ON the fourth day God collected the sun, that glorious luminary, with the moon, and, probably, the

* Longinus, chap. vii.

† As a further argument that wind or air was the primary agent, after creation, it has been observed, that as soon as ever the air was put in motion, there was light, which is nothing, say some, but air rarefied by the collision of its concreted parts.

‡ Spectacle de la Nature, tom. iii.

10 DISSERTATION I.

other orbs within our system, seeing they all influence one another; though, in this place, Moses has not made mention of them, it being no way material to his purpose. But that the fixed stars, which seem altogether beyond our region, and probably are the centre of systems belonging to themselves, as is the present fashionable, and not very unlikely opinion, were all constructed out of the same elements, on this day, we are under no necessity to suppose. Most, if not all of them, as has been already admitted, might have been created before, and some of them since, our world was brought into being. For though the last clause, in the 16th verse, in our translation, reads, *He made the stars also*; the words *he made*, as has been judiciously observed*, are not in the Hebrew text; and, therefore, the sense may be consistently rendered, *And God made two great lights †, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, with the stars*; that is, in the season, when they are seen twinkling, let the moon also, as regent of the sky, appear.

ALL fishes and fowls that inhabit the waters and the air were formed; on the fifth day, when animal life, with loco-motive powers began; and the divine blessing was bestowed on them, in these terms, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven, and it was so.*

* Dr. Taylor's Scrip. Div.

† Moses, in this place, does not follow physical exactness, but the impression made on our senses, the sun being larger than the moon, by many millions of times.

ON

DISSERTATION I 11

ON the sixth day, all cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth, after their several kinds, were produced; and, last of all, when the world was framed and furnished, as a fit mansion to receive him, was Man made; and, as his maker's vicegerent and representative, had *Dominion given to him, over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every thing that creepeth upon the earth; and his head crowned with glory and honour.*—

The same day, it is to be remarked, Eve was made, Moses informing us that *God created man male and female.* And, accordingly in the second chapter, where he is relating at greater length, what he had only sketched in the first, the words *God made*, have been rendered *God had made*, by several commentators.

Six days were thus employed in executing the great work of creation, though omnipotence could have performed it in a moment. But this time seems to have been employed, that natural means, and second causes, which the Almighty had appointed, might be regularly exerted, and men made capable of tracing the process, by a due application of thought and

* Voyez Saurin, de la creation, a Amsterdam, 1720.—Sancho-niatho, the Phenician, begins mankind from two mortals, called in Philo Byblius, who translated him into Greek, Protogonus and Eon. This Sanchoniatho, instead of forming his account of the origin of mankind, as Diodorus Siculus hath done, from what he thought to be the ancient philosophy, drew his history from registers, and hieroglyphical inscriptions on the temples of Phenicia and Egypt; and had conversed with Jerombal, priest of the god Jao, whom Sam. Bochart hath conjectured to be Jerubasil, or Gideon. Vide Canaan ejus, lib. iii. cap. 17.

For the objections against this history, see H. Dodwel's Discourse concerning it, printed at London 1681.

imagina-

imagination, on the one hand; and, on the other, so limited a space, for a design so vastly extensive, demonstrates the Creator's power, and forces our acknowledgments of wonder and admiration.

His magnificent plan being now finished, he who is blessed for ever, beheld, from the heaven of heavens, his high abode, this new addition to his empire, and pronounced every thing which he had made very good. And, the evening and the morning of that day ushering in sabbath, we are not without intimation, that angels, called *morning stars*, who kept the first vigils, *sounded for joy**, and sung halleluias to their and the world's creator and Lord; in the same manner, though infinitely more glorious, as the priests did, in their apparel, with trumpets and cymbals, when the foundations of the second temple were laid†.

On the creation of those purer spirits, and seemingly elder sons of God, Moses tells us nothing. Some imagining that they were created on one of the six foregoing days, have grounded their opinion on what is said at the beginning of the second chapter, *Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them*. In this sense, indeed, the host of heaven is sometimes to be taken in scripture; for instance, where Micaiah says to the king of Israel, *Hear thou, therefore, the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left*‡. And from the notice given us, we are sure they were witnesses of crea-

* Job xxxviii. 7.

† Ezra iii. 10.

‡ 1 Kings xxii. 19.

tion, and praised the Almighty for the wonders of his omnipotence and wisdom. But whether theirs immediately preceded that of the universe, or ought to be referred to more distant periods, no man has any right to determine; nor does any thing oblige us to believe that God alone had existed, till the period he brought this world into being. That there really are such beings as we call angels, that is, certain permanent substances, invisible, and imperceptible to our senses, endued with power and understanding superior to that of human nature, created by God, and subject to him, as the source and origin, the Lord and governor of all; ministering to his divine providence in the government of the world by his appointment, and more especially attending the affairs of mankind, is a truth fully attested by scripture; though we are not to give credit to every story about the apparitions of them.

A LEARNED Jew hath taken notice, at the close of the second day's work, that the words above cited, *God saw that it was good*, are not, as at the end of all the other days, pronounced. And his reason for the omission may be seen below *. From this expression, five times repeated, as well as from the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, and the universal fitness of things, a modern philosopher hath inferred, that all the parts of

* *Silentio, vero, hic minime prætereundum, quænam ob-
causam in operibus secundi diei non sit dictum, quia bonum; nam
de omnibus entibus innovatis, in ordinario, frequenti & constanti
statu existentibus, dixit, quia bonum. Ratio hæc res, mea ju-
dicio, manifesta est: hoc expansum, et res illa, quæ supra illud
est (aqua appellatur) abdita est et occulta nimis, et omnino non
Ens. Maim. cap. 30.*

nature

nature, and the constitution of the moral world, are on the best plan, and in the best disposition, they could possibly be *. The thought is noble, and not to be altogether rejected. Though amidst all the possibilities, ever present to the divine mind, whether on another scale, the same plan might not have been constructed, with equal advantages, what mortal is able to determine?

How remote from the present time, the creation of this visible system happened, the learned of all religions, and in all quarters and ages of the world, to whom it would be endless to refer, have anxiously enquired; and their opinions have never come so near to each other, as when they have rested on the authority of the scriptures. And even on this ground it must be acknowledged, there has been a considerable difference, according as the Hebrew, Samaritan, or Greek texts have been received; which has inclined not a few to believe, that this Epocha is a gordian root, not to be unravelled by human art. But admitting the genuineness of the Hebrew text, disputes, in regard to this matter, will be very nearly calmed, and a correspondent chain of chronology easily drawn through all the books of the Old Testament. Tracing the periods there made out, we reckon,

	Years.
From the beginning of the world to the deluge,	1656
From the deluge to the dispersion at Babel,	240
From the dispersion to the birth of Abraham,	130
From his birth to his vocation,	75

2101

† Leibnitz.

Brought

DISSERTATION I 15

	Years
Brought forward	2101
From his vocation to Jacob's going down in to Egypt,	215
From that period to the exit of his posterity from Egypt,	215
From the exit to the death of Moses,	40
From the death of Moses to the building of the first temple,	440
From the building to its destruction by Nebu- chadnezzar,	423
The captivity, leaving out twelve years, before it was destroyed,	58
An interpolation from Cyrus, who released the Jews, to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, depending on the monuments of profane history, when the commandment went forth to Nehe- miah to restore and rebuild Jerusalem,	91
From thence to the final destruction of the se- cond temple, by Titus, when the abomi- nation of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stood in the holy place,	490
Total	4073
But deducting the year of Christ, in which that event happened,	69

There will remain 4004

THE difficulty indeed is great, between the crea-
tion and the birth of Abraham, to reconcile the three
forementioned texts the one with the other. The
Samaritan, from Adam to the flood, falls short of
the Hebrew, three hundred and forty-nine years;
and

and the septuagint exceeds the latter, five hundred and eighty-six. On the other hand, from the birth of Arphaxed, two years after the flood, to the time when Terah had Abraham born to him, the Samaritan rises above the Hebrew calculation, six hundred and fifty years, and is itself surpassed, one hundred and thirty years, by the septuagint. The whole difference from the beginning of the world, to the birth of Abraham, between the Greek and the Hebrew records, is one thousand three hundred and sixty-six years; while the Samaritan pentateuch is below the former, eight hundred and sixty-five years, and above the latter, five hundred and one *.

FROM any remains of ancient learning, with which we are furnished, at this distance of time, it may be freely declared impossible to ascertain, how these variations happened. The national antipathy which subsisted between the Hebrews and Samaritans; the presumption of the seventy interpreters, in departing from the text; the ignorance or oversight of transcribers, may have severally contributed to embarrass these calculations. But what does the whole difference amount to, in regard to the doctrine that is here to be established? Only about thirteen centuries; which cannot in the least shake the great truth that pervades the

* Usserii Armachani, Chronologia sacra, p. 46.

Note. Agreeable to the opinion of some learned men, who think the period in the Hebrew too short, on account of the youth of the postdiluvian patriarchs, I have taken the liberty to insert seventy-eight years, between the deluge and the birth of Abraham; which is not near an equivalent for one hundred and thirty years of Cainan's life, when the septuagint makes Salah to be born; and yet of whom the Hebrew takes no notice.

Mosaic history. And it is no small satisfaction, that the great differences between the several copies end here; that is to say, immediately at the birth of Abraham, when we enter on a more certain series of time, about which chronologers are more generally agreed, and the copies vary, not several ages, as they do in the foregoing periods, but only a few years.

To these years of the world till the birth of Christ, we are to add, agreeable to the Dionysian or vulgar *Æra* — 1777, and the total will be, five thousand, seven hundred and eighty one, since the creation. And creation commencing in the seven-hundredth and tenth year of the Julian period, the birth of the Saviour of the world must have happened in the four thousand seven hundredth and fourteenth of that period, according to the best of our chronologers.

Of this newness of the world, Moses hath made, so to speak, the foundation-stone, upon which he hath rested the whole system of religion delivered by himself to mankind. Nor, as was said before of his cosmogony, or creation and frame of the world, and the various parts of it, are there any appearances in nature to disprove this newness of it; but, on the contrary, every thing confirms it, when we consider the material phenomena, population, government, discoveries, and the progress of all the arts and sciences.

With regard to the question, from what season of the year, is the work of creation to be dated? a cer-

* Usserii *annal. chron. sacra, pars altera, cap. xi. Struch. brev. chron. l. 4.*

tain Author * hath affirmed that it cannot be resolved fully, and seems to imply some sort of contradiction; seeing it is impossible, in the space of six days, in which the world was formed, that it could either be spring or autumn, or any other season, over the whole earth, in so short a time; as the vernal equinox in one place must necessarily be the autumnal in another; and in like manner the other seasons; according to the climates, and the different parts of the world. But this difficulty has been removed by supposing, that the question itself can only refer to the place where Adam was created †. And yet, notwithstanding this sensible reply, to the above senseless quibble, the precise season still remains unascertained. Some have supposed the vernal equinox to have been the time; and others pitched on both the summer and the winter Solstices; while, by far, the greater number have ventured their opinion, that it was autumn ‡, which seems the more probable, that the year anciently began from that time. This indeed was afterwards altered by Moses, who ordered that the ecclesiastical year should commence from the vernal equinox, or the month Nisan §: but the Jews, in civil affairs, still continued to compute from the former, or the month Tisri ||.

SOME difficulties of another nature, partly philosophical, and partly religious, which seem to clog this subject, come, after the account that has been given of it, to be considered. The first is; how it can be reconciled to the present system of the world, that our earth should be said to have been created

* Philo. de opif. mundi. † Univ. hist. ‡ Jacob. scapell. observ. in Gen. § Exod. xii. 2. || Stranchius chap. vi. of years
four

four days before the sun; seeing the sun is supposed, and almost demonstrated, to be the centre of this, and of all the planetary orbs? The solution to be offered, and probably true, is, that perhaps our globe, and the other planets, were, by the Almighty power of God, for that space of time, suspended in the open air, in a state of rest. But when the sun, as a central point, was formed, and the earth reduced to firmness and solidity, they might, by certain physical laws impressed on them by the Divine wisdom, receive those rapid and regular motions about the sun, and their own centres, which, by the same wisdom and the co-operation of eternal power, continue to this day, producing the most agreeable and necessary variety of day and night, and seasons; and, therefore, the annual and diurnal motions may, on the fourth day, be reckoned to have commenced*.

THE second difficulty of a similar nature, is, that light should be said to have been created previous to the sun; seeing the sun is alleged to be the fountain of light, by shedding luminous particles from his own body. Some interpreters are of opinion, that this part of the Mosaic history of creation, was adapted to the then present state and condition of the Hebrews, and calculated to serve, by way of precaution, to guard them against the idolatry of the Canaanites and Syrians, who worshipped Moloch, or the sun, as the Author of light†. But at the same time that he does strike at the root of this species of idolatry, by shewing that God alone is the Author of all that beauty which appears in the creation, and the sole giver

* Dr Taylor's scheme, &c.

† Abbé le Pluche.

of every good thing; and thereby confound those who admire *the creature more than the Creator*; he has not had recourse to a falsehood, to establish this important truth, nor advanced any thing in his history, which is repugnant to true philosophy. For light is visibly pre-existent to luminous bodies; if, in our notion of it, we distinguish between that sensation which we experience in ourselves on the presence of any illuminated body, and that inconceivably subtle matter, which makes the impression on the organs of sight, and paints on the optic nerve those objects, from the surfaces of which it was reflected to us. Light then, taken in this sense, is a body quite different from the sun, and independent on it, and might have existed before it, seeing it does now exist in it's absence, as well as when present; as electrical experiments abundantly shew, in midnight darkness. It is diffused from the one end of the creation to the other, traverses the whole universe, forms a communication between the most remote spheres, penetrates into the inmost recesses of the earth, and only waits to be put in a proper motion to make itself visible. In short, light is to the eye, what the air is to the ear; the body of light, as the other is of sound; and equally extended at all times from the most distant fixed stars to us, though it then only strikes our eyes, when impelled by the sun, or some other mass of fire*. Now, on this supposition, that light requires only to be excited, that element might well be created on the first day, and the Divine power alone might be the exciter, for the three first days of creation, till the sun, the instrumental, and stated exciter, was brought forth†.

* *Speclacle de la nature*, par le même auteur. tom. 3.

† See Dr. Tylor's scheme, &c.

INDEED as plants and trees sprung on the third day, a thought, which has both ingenuity and probability in it, ought not to pass unobserved; that though the sun had, for some time been obscured, by the vapors and heterogeneous particles of the earth, we are not to imagine but his formation was going on with that of the earth, and even had all along a considerable influence on it, as light and heat gradually increased, and the air became, from time to time, more and more pure and defecated, so as to assist the productions of the ground with greater power*. This energy in a certain degree seems to have been unavoidable, notwithstanding the appearance of solar light cannot be admitted.

THE third difficulty arises out of the profession made by all christians; namely, how God should here be said to perform all these things, while, in the new Testament, the formation of the world is ascribed to the Son of God, who afterwards came personally among men for their redemption? This may be easily obviated, and rendered consistent with our holy faith; either by considering our Lord to act by a derived power from his Father in creation, as the sole agent of all things, as well as in our redemption; or as a person in the holy Trinity, by his own eternal might and authority, and as *God blessed for ever*. And, upon serious reflection, to many it will clearly appear, that nothing less than uncreated excellence, could be the author of this universe; and that He whom we call our Saviour, must be acknowledged as *our Lord and our God* also.

* Universal History.

THE last difficulty occurring is, that since, as has been already hinted, there may be, and it is almost certain there are, many other worlds of the same, or greater magnitude, with our own; is it reasonable to believe the account which the gospel gives us, of that God, who made them all, assuming mortal flesh, that he might suffer and die for sinners, to reclaim them from wickedness, and deliver them from misery. This indeed the gospel does declare*, and who is able to refute its assertions? What know we of the rank, or the condition of creatures in other regions? May not we be the only creatures, that either needed, or were indulged with, so expensive and glorious a remedy? *He took not on him, we are told, the nature of Angels, but the nature of the seed of Abraham†. Great is the mystery of godliness; God manifested in the flesh‡.* Instead of entertaining dangerous conceits, let us, therefore, correct our roving imagination, subject ourselves to the testimony of revelation, and account this a faithful saying, and most worthy of our hearty acceptance that Christ Jesus, the Creator came, in the dispensation of the fulness of the times, for the salvation of the world§.

AND now in the end, reviewing this great subject, where the work of creation has been so minutely considered, who can withhold the poet's beautiful exclamation?

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
 Almighty thine this universal frame!
 Thus wonderous fair! Thyself how wonderous then!

* St. John, 1st. and all the Gospels and Epistles.† Heb. 2. 16.

‡ 1 Tim. 3. 16.

§ 1 Tim. 1. 16.

How vast, and wonderous mighty the arm, which stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth! How powerful was his command, who said, *Let there be light, and there was light! Let there be a firmament! for he only spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast! He formed Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the South! Lift up your eyes on high eastward and westward, and south and north, and behold who hath created all these things! And he still bringeth out all the host of heaven by number; he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might; for that he is strong in power, not one of them faileth. He suspends thousands and thousands of worlds—of amazing bulk and weight—in distant regions of space, and steadily guides their infinitely various, tremendously rapid, and most regular motions!—In such lofty expressions do the holy scriptures celebrate the exertion of the divine omnipotence in the work of creation; and represent every thing as done instantaneously, and with as little difficulty as speaking a bare word.*

As for goodness, what can we say of it! when we go through all the works of creation, providence and redemption, it is a subject which the tongues of men and angels, shall never be able to exhaust! For the goodness of God is boundless as his universal works, and endless as the ages of eternity. *Who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or shew forth all his praise? Not only by goodness was an incomprehensible variety of creatures brought into existence; but by the same goodness also, is suitable provision made for their preservation and welfare. The eyes of all things wait upon thee, O thou giver of all good, that thou mayest give them*

their

their meat in due season; and thou openest thine hand liberally, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. He maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that cry unto him. The fowls of the air are fed by our heavenly father; and the lilies of the field are arrayed in colours far exceeding Solomon, in all his glory. Man he has made only a little lower than the angels; and so loved the world as to give his only begotten son. — Not to speak of myriads and myriads of other beings, which he is continually and plentifully supplying with all the necessities of their natures, out of the plenitude of his own existence! thus, is he good, and does good, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

THE wisdom of God appears as illustrious in the variety, beauty, exactness, order, and harmony, in which he formed and fixed the whole universe. From the brightest star in the firmament of heaven, to the smallest atom on the face of the earth, there is no part of matter, great or little, vile or precious, wherein the wisdom of the Creator does not most clearly and undeniably appear. But there are still hid greater things than these, and we have seen but a few of his works. And therefore in the devoutest admiration, the language of the holy psalmist is the fittest to be adopted by us: O Lord, how manifold are thy works? In wisdom hast thou made them all! The world is full of thy riches!

WITH such reflections let us possess our minds, and our mouths must be filled with the highest praises. This God is our God, and will be our guide for ever. Let us in all things meekly and affectionately submit

submit to the supreme ruler, in the most unreserved resignation to his Providence. Let us put our trust in God. We see his power, his understanding, and love. There can be nothing too hard for him to effect; and he is infinitely gracious and good. To this God, therefore, who made the heavens, and the earth, the eternal, and everlasting Father, let us ascribe unchangeable glory, dominion, and majesty, through ages and worlds without end.

GENESIS I. 2.
H A V I N G before described the inferior part of nature, made and fashioned for the reception and use of man, some farther discourse concerning his formation, nature, and state, may be necessary, and desirable. I shall now endeavour to describe the inferior part of nature, as it is in the original condition, before the fall of man. I shall then observe the language of the Creator as changed, who, instead of saying, let there be light, he said in regard to light, and all the other parts of the material universe, is represented as addressing himself to the chief work here below, in this manner, now the earth is formed and finished, we will make man in the likeness of our image, to subdue it, to rule over it, to keep it, and enjoy it, by which distinguished manner of speaking, the superior excellence of human nature is manifestly signified.

DISSER-

AND God, for so it is in the original rendering, and in the Hebrew, says, Let us make man. Here, by a certain analogy, we are required to attend, that noun appellative, ascribing dominion to God, according to the Hebrew idiom, are put in the plural number, instead of the singular.

inherent to the Supreme Being, in the most unreserved
revelation to his Providence. Let us put our trust

in God. There can be nothing too hard for him to
effect, and he is infinitely gracious and good. To

this God, therefore, who made the heavens, and the
earth, the eternal, and everlasting Father, let us ascribe

ages and words without end.

GENESIS I, 2.

HAVING before described the inferior parts of
nature, made and fashioned for the reception and use
of man, some farther discourse concerning his forma-
tion, nature and state, may be necessary and desi-
rable.

HERE then observe, the language of the Creator is
changed, who, instead of saying, *let there be men*, as
he said in regard to light, and all the other parts of the
material universe, is represented as addressing himself
to the chief work here below, in this manner; now
the earth is formed and finished, *let us make man*,
the noblest of all the sublunary productions, to inha-
bit, cultivate, and enjoy it. By which distinguished
manner of speaking, the superior excellence of human
nature is manifestly signified.

AND Gods, for so it is in the original reading, *said*,
Let us make man. Here, by a certain author, we are
required to attend, that nouns appellative, ascribing
dominion to God, according to the Hebrew idiom, are
put in the plural number, instead of the singular;
and

DISSERTATION II.

27

and that, in the genius of that language, it is only a magnificent way of expressing the majesty of the most high. Of this supposed idiom several examples have been given; particularly, where, concerning the builders of the tower in the plains of Shinaar (a project hereafter to be considered) *the Lord God said, go to, let us go down, and confound their language, and scatter them abroad; * and let Israel rejoice in his makers †; and thy makers is thy husband ‡.*

BUT admitting that the phrase, *and Gods said let us make man*, and the other places adduced, is agreeable to the structure of the Hebrew language; the question, upon what idea is so singular an expression founded, is still pertinent. And the answer seems to be more than admissible; that when Moses wrote the history of the creation, the Hebrews probably knew the doctrine of the Trinity, and couched their conceptions and belief of it, under this peculiar mode of speech; as, most certainly, all languages derive their peculiarities, from the nature of the knowledge which those who speak or write, design to communicate to one another.

THE Jewish doctors, writing on this subject, have fancied strange things, and had recourse to many fictions, as one of themselves testifies §. With whom does God here consult? with the whole fabric of heaven and earth, says R. Levi. For in the same manner, as a king, though possessing supreme power and dominion, often refers his determinations to his subjects, as a proof of his tender regard to his

* Gen. xi. 7. † Psalm cxlix. 2. Heb. *בְּעֵינֵינוּ*. ‡ Isaiah liv. 5. *וְעֵינֵינוּ* § Vanē disseruerunt sapientes nostri, &c. R. Menassih Ben. Israel Questio 6.

servants

servants and dependants; so did the king of kings convoke all the worlds, which he had created, when he was about to make this noblest of his creatures. The same opinion, R. Solomon also espouses, that God, in these words, proposes the example of his own humility to us, who, though the source of all power, is represented as taking counsel from inferior beings. Likewise R. Lemuel bar Nahman says, that God consulted with the work of each of the six days, by which he signified it to be his will, that every thing which he had made should, in some measure, concur in the creation of man. And the divine theologians of the Cabala (so R. Menasseh calls them) understanding the expression in a more refined sense, interpret thus, whereas we are to remark in all other places, that the sacred scriptures speak in the singular number, as, *let there be light; let there be a firmament*; the words, when man is to be made, are in the plural, thereby signifying, agreeable to the doctrine of Plato, that God conferred with second causes, about the constitution of a creature that was to participate of immortality. In this manner, do the most of them, too tedious to transcribe, speak; from their ignorance of that analogy, between the several parts of Revelation, which may very easily be traced.

INDEED this Rabbi, from whom these opinions are taken, at the same time he seems to be afraid of undermining the doctrine of God's Unity, by a literal interpretation of the words, *Let us make man*, relates a tradition among the Jews which deserves our notice, and passes unrefuted by himself. It is this; at the time Moses wrote his book by the command of God, and these words were dictated to him, he stopped, and

and exclaimed, *O Lord, wouldst thou then drive men into error, and make them call in question the doctrine of thine own unity!* when the answer was given him, *I command thee to write, and if any one will err, let him err**. Another of the same denomination, likewise acknowledges difficulties in the passage where Moses says, *the spirit of God moved upon the waters*, by which some of our nation, says he, have understood *the spirit of the Messiah†*; as also in the words, *In the beginning Gods*, agreeable to the original, *created the heavens and the earth*. In short, the union of a plural with a singular, contrary to the construction of all languages, many of the Jewish doctors clearly perceived, could not be without design. And without attempting any other illustration, they freely confess, **THIS IS THE MYSTERY OF THE WORD ELOHIM (GODS) THERE ARE THREE DEGREES, EACH DEGREE BY ITSELF IS ONE, AND YET THE THREE TOGETHER ARE BUT ONE; THEY ARE UNITED TO ONE, AND ARE NOT SEPERATE ‡.**"

WITH regard to the books of their law, which teach, *the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt have no other Gods before me §*, it is to be carefully attended to, that nothing there is to be understood as descriptive of the divine nature, which is altogether incomprehensible; but only as a caution against idolatry, or the worship of the many false and imaginary deities, to which the folly and wickedness of mankind had, from the earliest ages, led them to pay supreme honors, through the vainest and most impious belief of their

* R. Mehasseh, Ben Israel Quest. 6 p. 10.

† Hakspan Cabal, p. 342.

‡ R. Simeon Ben Jochai in zohar. Sect 6. in Levit.

§ Deut. 6. 4. Exod. 20. 3.

authority and influence to protect and prosper them. And therefore a doctrine, no way repugnant to the unity of God, may be still insisted on as true; that there were at man's creation, and constantly are in the schemes of providence in relation to him, certain divine agents engaged, whom we reverently term the Trinity, without presuming to represent or explain, either their sacred essence or dependence, by any figure or reasoning whatever.

ANOTHER question, not less controverted than the former, hath arisen concerning the image of God. *And Gods said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* To reckon up all the opinions that have been entertained and urged, would be equally painful and unprofitable, and a perversion of the end here proposed. It hath been alledged by some interpreters, that it is the body of man which was made after the image of God;* that the divinity united itself to a body which was to serve as a model for Adam; and that this was no other than the body of the Messiah. The original and the copy, they even describe in the liveliest colours. How astonishing is it that men, who have had revelation for their guide, the words of which are so express and reasonable, though they still leave some room for a natural curiosity, should have followed such visions! They were much more pardonable in heathens who reasoned, from the suitableness of things, that the most excellent nature should be the most beautiful and perfect. Now what assemblage of members, what disposition of linea-

* Maimonides, more Nevochim. Pars. 1. Cap. 1. p. 1. where he expressly says, " Firmiter ipsi crediderunt, Deum eandem quam homines habere formam et figuram. Hoc tamen differe statuunt, quod ipsius (Dei sc.) corpus majus et splendidius.

ments and features, what figure, what form, can be more elegant than that of man? So far does he excel all other living creatures, that if God be living, he hath, without doubt, the human form itself.

THE opinion of some divines is, that this image consisted in holiness, or purity and moral perfection; which is certainly one of the principal attributes of the Creator, or perhaps only a summary term for complete excellence. This, heathens themselves, who have said, that we cannot approach nearer the likeness of God, than by the exercise of righteousness, in the highest degree of which we are capable, have manifestly acknowledged†. And that Adam was created with such an inclination and power, unless we derogate from the divine justice and goodness, cannot be denied. Only we must take care, that the notion here suggested of his original innocence be such, as not to contradict that freedom of his will, which the event shews he had, in the forfeiture which he afterwards made of his happiness.

THERE are writers‡, on the other hand, who are much disgusted with this opinion, that the expression under view, should mean that man was created either in righteousness or holiness, or even with any knowledge itself. For, say they, this is supposing, that Adam had actual righteousness concreated with him, or wrought into his nature, and belonging to him as a natural faculty and instinct; and needed not to make any acquisitions under trial, or by habitual practice. From the grossness of which misrepresentation the

* Cicero de natura deorum, lib. 1st.

† Plato.

‡ See the whole tribe of the modernizers of divinity.

truth will shew itself: That, in regard to knowledge, man had certainly impressed on his mind, such principles of instruction, concerning his Maker, his duty and happiness, as were necessary in his state, and adapted to his chief end. While, by righteousness, no other thing was ever understood, than perfection or rectitude of nature, such as the wisest and kindest of all Fathers thought fit to bestow upon man, when he introduced him into existence; and designed him, as the greatest badge of his distinction, for moral service and obedience. And the result of this knowledge unperverted, and of this disposition preserved, must necessarily be great holiness, and serenity of heart, daily purified and refined, by the Divine favor, and submission to God's will.

If we will listen, without prejudice, to the New Testament on this subject, we will hear St. Paul, in several of his epistles, speaking of that state into which the world had degenerated, and shewn the strongest propensity to love and abide in, ever since the first transgression, under the notion of a nature that required to be made over again. *You have now put off the old man with his deeds; and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.** And the truth in Jesus teacheth you, that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness†.

THESE scriptures, it is true, have been supposed to relate only to the impure, idolatrous body of the hea-

* Coloss. iii. 9. 10.

† Ephes. iv. 21. 22. 24.

thens,

thens, and the Christian church and community. But, by this explanation, what can be gained? *The Old Man* did represent the sinful and miserable condition of the world, in the Apostle's days; and for a long time before, even since the original apostacy; mankind from that time having had on them evident marks of infirmity and spiritual death, without the least symptoms of a revival from the grossest ignorance and wickedness, till, by another dispensation, the same in design as the first, they were restored from the ruins of the Fall, to the primitive universal religion of rational beings, or that *knowledge* of God and their duty, which the change of human circumstances rendered necessary, by the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, in order to that *righteousness* and *holiness* in which Adam was created. So that, in the strictest, and most important moral sense, *we are all God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, to which we were ordained*, when our first parents were made after the image of God, in his likeness.

But this is not all, nor yet the dominion over the creatures, which was granted to the first man, implied in the *image* of God: For, though either of these are frequently thus taken in scripture, there is a certain generality and comprehension in the words, which admit of a larger latitude, and not repugnant to any other passage. We may, therefore, understand by the *image* of God, a likeness of nature also, spirituality, a faculty of thinking, reflecting and loving, which exalts a man above all material beings, and brings him as near as his nature is capable, to that of God. This enlarged sense, adopted by many

modern interpreters, was likewise received by the ancients among both Jews and Christians*.

It only remains to be mentioned, as was hinted before, that the first pair were made *male* and *female*, in the manner described by Moses, who resolves the operation of making the *woman*, into the divine wisdom and power, by which all things, even out of nothing, can be made; that they might multiply, and supply a constant succession of their own kind, to inhabit the whole earth; and be a perpetual memorial of the conjugal union and affection in riches and poverty, in sickness and in health, till death part husband and wife, according to God's holy ordinance; which his blessing did, and does still, and will continue to accompany, till the consummation of the world.

AND from this thrice venerable and most illustrious pair, have sprung the unnumbered millions, who, since their day, have stocked and overspread the face of the globe, and swayed the sceptre of power, conferred at creation, over all things on the ground, and in the air, in the seas, and in the caverns of darkness.

BUT to proceed: Left man, dazzled with his own excellence, should regard himself as an independent creature, it was appointed by God, that his soul, which constituted the principal part of his being, should be joined to a portion of matter, to put him continually in mind of his maker; nothing suggest-

* R. Menasseh, Ben. Israel, Quest. 7. Tertull: L. 11.

ing to us more strongly the supreme power God hath over our spirits, than the influence we feel the body to have over the soul: This is so great, that the faculty within us, capable of forming the greatest designs, and of stretching its views almost over space and eternity, is arrested in the sphere of its action by the external vehicle, vastly inferior to it in dignity.

The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. To this man was given the designation of Adam, either to denote the beauty of his soul, or the baseness of his body; as some of the learned have derived it from an Æthiopian word, which bears the former sense, and others from the Hebrew, which signifies *earth* *. And for the sustenance and nourishment of his mortal nature, the free use of all vegetable productions was allowed him: *Behold I have given you, said God, every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree, yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.*

THE particulars concerning the formation of man, and the state he was made in, being thus collected, it cannot but be our interest and duty, to take a farther survey of the nature which God has graciously bestowed upon us. The body consists of the meanest materials; but the mind is of heavenly extraction; an emanation from him who is the source and centre of intelligence. *The inspiration of the Almighty gave Adam understanding; and this noblest of our Maker's gifts, with all the other qualities that adorned*

* Ludolphus, lib. 1. cap. xv.

the first man, may still be our distinguishing portion, notwithstanding our apostacy and fallen condition; with this difference, that they must be acquired by discipline and labour; and may lie uncultivated, or be set on wrong objects, having fatally received a contrary bias. But yet the force and excellence of the human understanding, weak and wavering as it is, through neglect and perversion, shines forth in a surprising variety of inventions and discoveries. By this faculty we penetrate into the bowels of the earth; survey and admire the contrivance and beauty of the vast fabric of the world about us; and trace the signatures of the most astonishing wisdom and regularity, in the various adjustments and revolutions of the heavenly bodies. Generations and actions, characters and events, that existed long before we had a being, are brought under its powerful operations, on the one side; and on the other, futurity, even so far as to the final period of the world, with all its works, is raised up to view. Eternity itself is not covered; and the wretchedness and felicity of creatures, far beyond our state, strongly appear. In short, we can stretch our thoughts to the utmost bounds, and contemplate the nature of God infinitely perfect.

CONSIDER, O Man! this exercise of thought, by which thou art made able to improve thy nature, and this capacity of comfort and joy of which thou mayst participate; and compare these powers and blessings thou possessest, with the allotment of the brutes that perish, and the narrow limits within which they are confined; and say, if thou art not the chief of God's works here below, and in excellence

DISSERTATION II.

57

lence and dignity only *a little lower than the angels themselves.*

BUT the form and determination of our characters, in regard to good and evil, shew still more remarkably wherein our singular honor and advantage lie. While mere instincts or accidents purely external and indifferent, fix the pursuits of inferior creatures; while they are utterly unable to judge of causes and events; to draw consequences, or reason about the nature and tendencies of things; when to avoid, or when to embrace, unless it be by the information of some fallacious sense; and are therefore rather impelled or actuated like a machine, than moved by a free and an enlightened choice; we *whom God has made wiser*, can deliberate, compare past with present occurrences, examine and perceive what is before us; see this to be good, and therefore pursued, that to be evil, and therefore declined; this will improve and exalt our natures, and that sink us into dishonor and misery. By a divine lamp, originally delivered to us, we can study and observe the precepts of divine wisdom, and by an imitation of some of God's moral perfections, acquire farther lineaments of his *image*; converse with the Father of all; and aspire after, and long for the everlasting enjoyment of his favour. In an higher degree, indeed, the most exalted spirits God has made may possess those abilities; but they cannot have any of a nobler kind.

BUT the dignity of human nature will appear in a still stronger light, when we consider the improvement it has received by the grace of the gospel.

When

When the noble structure of our body, distinguished by its erect form, and majesty of its appearance, from all the other orders of creatures upon the earth, was doomed to destruction, on account of transgression, and to mingle with the dust from whence it was originally reared ; when the finest feelings of humanity were stifled, and the powers and abilities of the will and understanding impaired and perverted, by misapplication and criminal indulgences ; as Christians we are assured of a glorious immortality restored, and the highest privileges conferred on us for our present improvement. To purchase all this, the Son of God vouchsafed to assume our nature ; and by our relation to him as brethren, we are related to the father of all as his children. We are called to communion in the blessings of his kingdom, and the glory of his exalted state. This high advancement and happiness, is the fruit of a mighty apparatus in the divine administration ; and of the most astonishing counsels. The Son of God must be incarnate. With all the characters of divine power about him, he must converse some years in our world ; submit, notwithstanding his high dignity, to all the sinless infirmities of human nature ; be persecuted, suffer, and die ; miraculously rise again from the dead, ascend on high ; be invested with dominion over all worlds ; and have the administration of all affairs given into his hands. Amazing counsel for the redemption of man, who had undone himself after the Creator had *made him perfect*, in his kind ! It is the wonder of angels, and the subject of their loftiest songs.

HAVING

HAVING still in us, indeed, principles of a very different quality from those that originally belonged to us, while we are in this world we will be subject to perpetual attacks, and engaged in constant warfare. *But even hereunto are we called.* By the correction of our natures, and the removal of every thing that occasions confusion in them, the man of God must be reclaimed by diligent discipline, and brought back to his primitive excellence. *We are to grow in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ,* and in conformity of heart and life to the blessed will of Heaven. The objects of our study and care, are to be obedience to God, and *the recompence of reward.* Being enlightened after our darkness, by the bright truths of holiness and salvation, we are obliged to learn and meditate on these things, *to hide them in our hearts,* that we may be thus fitting ourselves for a much higher and more perfect degree of existence and service, in a better world.

DISSERTATION III.

OF PARADISE.

GENESIS II.

WHEN man was made, as if the whole earth, abounding with the richest productions, had not been sufficient for him, God, for his greater happiness, placed him in a part of it, distinguished from all the rest, by its delightful situation, and its extraordinary luxuriance and fertility. *The Lord God, says Moses, planted a garden eastward in Eden; or had planted, probably on the third day; and there he put the man whom he had formed, perhaps in another place. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food: The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.*

In the Vulgate version *, the puerile conceit, that the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the

* Plantaverat autem Dominus deus Paradisum voluptatis à principio. Vulg. Ed. Sixti V. Pont. Max. Jussu, 1592.

beginning,

beginning, is entirely grounded upon the transposition of the words *Eden* and *eastward*, from their local, to a strictly literal signification. That is to say, *Eden*, which is the name of a country, is there translated *pleasure*, and *eastward*, rendered *the beginning*.

INDEED this Hebrew word * itself is ambiguous; but the situation of the sacred writer; and the sense in other places, very plainly determine the meaning of it: and tho' *Eden*, interpreted sentimentally, is only another term for *pleasure*, the obvious intention of Moses was to describe a territory.

THE Septuagint † have only changed *garden* into *Paradise*, retaining the word *Eden*, and evidently understood it to have lain *eastward* from Egypt, or Midian, where this historian wrote.

A CERTAIN place, therefore, really existing, being designed by Moses, the situation of it, in respect either to the antediluvian or present state of the earth, comes very naturally to be inquired after. Though alas! the extreme heat, which have accompanied disputes concerning it, may convince us, that the spirit of meekness, which constituted the happiness of that blessed abode, is not always to be found among the learned themselves: While, perhaps, their utmost efforts to settle the point in question, will not be sufficient to reconcile them. The geography of Moses, it must be confessed, is sometimes so concise, that it is very difficult to establish critical doctrines on the short

* Heb. עֵדֶן.

† Vide LXX. in Loco.

hints he has given us. And the very list of opinions arising from this difficulty, is enough to frighten any one from the slightest examination of them; seeing there is scarcely any part of the universe, which hath not been fixed on for the scite of Paradise. It hath been placed in the third heaven, in the fourth, in the heaven of the moon, in the moon itself, in the middle region of the air, above the earth, below, and beyond it, in a place concealed, and far from the knowledge of man. The regions under the Artick pole, Tartary, and the Caspian Sea, have alternately had this honor conferred on them. Terra del Fuego has been thought of; the Banks of the Ganges; the Isle of Ceylon, and the name of the Indies derived from *Eden*. The same privilege has been claimed for China; and even some country beyond it undiscovered. It has been placed in Armenia the Less; in Africa, under the equator; near the mountains of the moon, where the Nile is supposed to have its source; in Mesopotamia; in Assyria; in Persia; Babylonia; in Armenia the Greater; in Arabia, and Palestine. Europe itself has been esteemed a quarter of the globe not altogether unfit for the habitation of the fruit of man, and his happy consort*.

YET, after all these sports of fancy, it is not denied, that the situation of this garden, by learning and industry, properly employed, may, in some measure be ascertained. In order to this investiga-

* Bochart, Phaleg. l. i. cap. iv.

tion, the point must be first determined, whether Moses is to be understood as describing a country in its original state, or as it appeared at the time when he himself lived. Adopting the former opinion, as some have done †, an insuperable difficulty must be encountered, in regard to the precise spot where Paradise was situated, on account of the many changes which internal convulsions, and especially the general deluge, may be well supposed to have produced on the surface of the earth, after a period of two or three thousand years. Chusing the latter, which seems perfectly reasonable, as most of the names, used in the description, are of modern imposition, the difficulty will be avoided; and the only task remaining, will be to find out the place, by the characters given of it.

Our of Eden, or perhaps from the upper limits of it, we are told, *went a river to water the garden, and from thence*, which, in relation to the place, may either mean above or below it, *it was parted, and became into four heads*, or smaller rivers. *The name of the first is Pison, which compasseth the whole land of Havilah. The name of the second is Gihon, which compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia, as it is translated for Cush, now Chusistan. The name of the third river is Hiddekel, which goeth towards the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.* Of the names of two of these rivers, we are told, no traces have remained for a long time, viz. Pison and Gihon; the Greek and Roman writers, calling them, after their parting, by the names they had before they met, Euphrates

† Saurin, Disc. 11. P. 25. Imp. a Amster. 1720.

44 DISSERTATION III.

and Tigris*. But notwithstanding the abolition of names, the accidental variation of currents, and the new aspects which the face of countries are well known to assume in a very short time, conjectures not at all improbable, concerning the place of Paradise, have been formed on the above description; of which the two following deserve our notice,

FIRST, some † suppose Eden to have been near Coelo-Syria; that the river mentioned arose somewhere between the mountains Libanus and Anti-Libanus, and from thence run to the place where Euphrates now divides Syria and Mesopotamia, or Diarbeck, where it was divided into two, namely, Euphrates, and a stream which passed through the ridge of mountains that run cross the country, and joined itself to the Tigris, with which it run into the Persian Gulf. This stream they call Hiddekel. Much about the same place where Hiddekel parted, they suppose the Euphrates to divide again into two other streams, which ran through the land of the Ishmaelites, and separated the range of hills at the entrance of Arabia Felix, and, enclosing between their streams, a part of that country, met again, and were afterwards divided, and ran, the one into the Indian, and the other into the Red Sea. These they make Gihon and Pison.

SECONDLY, There are not a few, who all agree in the main, that Eden was in Chaldaea, and that the garden was somewhere near the rivers, among which Babylon was afterwards built; They prove the land

* Bp. Patrick in Loco.

† Le Clerc.

of Havilah, by undeniable arguments, to be the country adjacent to the present Euphrates, all along and upon the banks of that river, and spreading thence towards the Deserts of Arabia. The land of Cush, which every one knows is falsely rendered Ethiopia in our translation, was that part of Chaldaea, where Cush the son of Ham settled after the flood.

Now, as to the *first* of these schemes, it is indeed true, there was a place in Syria called Eden, of which the prophet Amos speaks; *I will break the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden**; but this Eden was of much later date than that where Adam was placed. Besides Syria is not east to the place where Moses wrote, but rather, if not quite north. And none of the descriptions which Moses has given of Eden belong to any part of Syria. Nor are there any rivers in the world that run so fancifully as they are here represented, out of one another; and repeatedly reverting to the same tract; not to urge the extravagant assertion of the Indian and Red Sea, receiving them separately at their final *embouchure*; while the latter never could possibly be the outlet of any river, through the mountains and lands of Arabia, that had its source to the eastward of them. Even the reply, that the earth and course of rivers were altered by the flood, cannot be admitted. For, as was said before, Moses did not describe the situation of this place in antediluvian names, the denomination of rivers and lands about them, being all of later date than the

* Amos, i, 5.

flood; and it is certain Moses intended, according to the known geography of the world, and his own notions of it, to give us hints of the place near which Eden in the former world, and the garden of Paradise was situated.

THE second scheme seems to come much nearer the truth than this; and to have but small objections against it. There is, indeed, no draught of the country which shews the rivers exactly to answer Moses's description of them; but it is easy to suppose, that the rivers, about Babylon, have at several times been so much altered by streams and canals, made by the sovereigns of that potent empire, that we never had a draught of them agreeable to what they were when Moses wrote about them*.

It hath been vaguely said, that the most judicious among the learned, such as Patrick, Heylin, Huet, and Spanheim, are agreed that Paradise was seated in the south of Chaldæa, between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, *because* these and several smaller rivers effectually watering this land, render it always most exceedingly fruitful†. But instead of this, it is the Mosaic geography, not the amenity of the place, that guides these great men in their determinations; and they have the suffrage of the most eminent for learning and ingenuity, to support them in their opinion.

ONE of the above named commentators, hath so distinctly delineated the course of the river that wa-

* Shuckford, book 1, page 75.

† See Herm. Moll, under the article Diarbeck at large.

tered Paradise; and the relative situation of the garden, in words †; that a late writer * hath been able to sketch it out in a draught, and inserted it in his work, to assist the understanding of his readers. But, alas! neither the one nor the other seem to have sufficiently attended, that in no chart ever exhibited, did the Tigris and Euphrates ever run so far in the same channel, as they represent them; nor, indeed, could they possibly, from their present distance from each other, and the nature of the country which lies between them.

THIS, therefore, may teach us the vanity of dogmatizing, in regard to the identical spot where our first parents had their happy residence during the period of their innocence; though it appears most probably to have been near the very place, where the first great monarchy of the world began, and its regal seat was erected.

AND as most of the fabulous accounts, in old times, of things relating to the original state of man, were derived from the fountains of truth, and dressed up according to mens fancies, and the established theological opinions; so have the ancient Heathens evidently borrowed from the Mosaic description of Paradise, their accounts of the golden age of innocence and plenty; when man was perfectly happy, and the earth produced spontaneously every thing that was good and desirable. From this sacred tradition they multiplied their paradises, which they generally placed out of our continent;

† Patrick in Loco.

* Dr. Taylor in his scheme.

in the ocean, or beyond it, or in another hemisphere; as the garden of the Hesperides, the Fortunate Islands, Ogygia, and the like; which being all characterized like so many paradises, were all romantically situated by their geography and descriptions of them *. The Christian fathers too, in their warm imaginations, followed, but too implicitly, the profane authors, and carried Paradise into the southern hemisphere, or beyond the equinoctial, where they believed the sun more *viridif*, and the soil more generous; and a late learned man has joined them in this notion; though he supposes the whole earth, before the fall, to be, in an eminent degree, paradisiacal †.

IN TO *this garden*, the topography of which has been so amply discussed, *the Lord God put the man whom he had formed*. Having prepared a proper place of habitation for him, and furnished the garden of Eden with every tree that could delight the eye, or please the taste, the Almighty conducted man, the chief work of his creation, and lord of all inferior creatures, from the place where he made him, to this blissful dwelling; that he might *dress* and cultivate it, *keep* it from the incursions of animals, and enjoy it as his own inheritance; and, no doubt revealed himself to him as his Creator and sovereign, to inform him of his state, his duty and dependence. Revealed himself to him he most evidently did, in the grant of the vegetable productions given to him for his food, and in assuring him that he had the dominion over all animals; in regard to the law and state of

* Univ. Hist. B. 1. chap. 1. † Dr. Burnet, B. 11. chap. 7.
marriage

marriage, hereafter to be considered; in the communication of language, and such other necessary matters *. All these points are manifestly expressed in the Mosaic relation; excepting it may be thought divine instruction in the use and application of speech, is not so clearly inferable. But that God made man a social creature, needs not to be proved; and that when he made him such, he withheld nothing from him that was any way necessary to his well-being, in society, is a clear consequence from the wisdom and goodness of him who made him; and if he withheld nothing from him any way necessary to his well-being, much less would he withhold from him that which is the instrument of the greatest happiness; a reasonable creature is capable of in this world, the exercise of the tongue—the glory of man. If it was not good for Adam to be alone, neither certainly was it good for him to have a companion, to whom he could not readily communicate his thoughts; with whom he could neither ease his anxieties, nor divide, or double his joys, by a kind, a friendly, a reasonable, a religious conversation; and how could he do this in any degree of perfection, and to any height of rational happiness, is utterly inconceivable without the use of speech †.

ONE case in point, which strongly confirms all this reasoning, obviously presents itself. Moses tells us, that *the Lord God brought every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living crea-*

* Dean Delany's Rev. Exam. Diss. i, ii, iii, iv, v.

† Dean Delany's Rev. Exam. page 23.

ture, that was the name thereof. What is here said of Adam's language, must be applied to Eve also. And the passage is an express testimony that both of them were taught divinely the use of speech. As God instructed man in religion, says an ingenious, learned and masterly writer*, can we believe that he would not at the same time teach him to speak, so necessary to support the intercourse between him and his maker? Can we think that God would leave the man and the woman to themselves, to get out of the forlorn condition of brutality, mute and incommunicative, as they could? But, if I am not much mistaken, we have the clearest evidence from Moses, that God did indeed teach men language. It is where he tells us, that *God brought every beast of the field to Adam*. Here, by a common figure of speech, instead of directly relating the fact that God taught man language, the historian represents it by shewing God in the action of doing it, in a particular mode of information; the most apposite we can conceive, namely, elementary instruction, in giving names to substances, with which Adam was to be most conversant, and which, therefore, had need of being distinguished, each by its proper name. How familiar an image do these words convey of a learner of his rudiments? *And the Lord God brought every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air to Adam, to SEE what he would call them.* In short, the legislator's manner of relating this important fact, has, in my opinion, an uncommon elegance.

IN this review of the creatures before Adam, as many wise and good ends might be designed and an-

* Warburr. Div. Leg. v. ii. p. 1.

swered by it, such as making him acquainted with their several natures, and giving him an early opportunity of exercising his dominion over them, by giving them names, which, we are informed, was the master's prerogative over his servants; so there appears neither difficulty nor absurdity. For certainly it could be no hardship to him who created them, to cause every species of animals to pass along as he pleased; nor is at all absurd to suppose, that he would present these works of his hands to the view of that superior creature, to whom he had given the dominion over them. If two of each species only were at first created, even in that case two were quite sufficient to pass before Adam, for the end designed. And if, by any means, the Lord God made Adam acquainted with the nature of the several creatures, he would doubtless give them names agreeable thereto, in that language, which was the primæval one; and with the power of speaking which language, we must necessarily suppose him endued at the beginning. For, as being created in a state of perfection, he must have been capable of conversing and communicating his ideas, which we can have no more difficulty in conceiving, than what we see every day, that the brute animals are born with their several distinct voices, and modes of expressing what they feel and desire, how few or many soever their sensations may be. Man, therefore, may easily be imagined, as being endued with superior faculties, to have been formed capable of expressing his ideas in regular language; a power wherewith God *can* endue his creatures instantaneously, as was abundantly proved on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples of our Lord

received the gift of tongues, and were enabled to speak in languages to which before they were utter strangers.*

BUT before we conclude this Dissertation, what several commentators have well observed, must not be omitted; that the emblematical representations of Heaven, in the new Testament, are borrowed, as from various other images of things, and scenes of happiness on the earth; so chiefly from the description of the primæval feat of innocence and felicity; hence Heaven is called Paradise in several passages, by our Lord and his Apostles. And in the description of the new Jerusalem, in the book of the Revelations †, *the holy city coming down from God is represented as being of pure gold, the foundation of the gates garnished with all manner of precious stones, and the twelve gates themselves of twelve pearls; plainly alluding to the gold, the bdellium, or pearl, and the onyx, or precious stones, in the description of the earthly paradise in Eden. In the midst of the street of the city, and of either side of the river, it is likewise said, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* Here all the figures fill our minds with the thoughts of that happiness, only raised higher as this is heavenly, which our first parents enjoyed in perfect innocence, and the sensible favour of their maker. Moreover, *the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God, as plainly alludes to the river of Paradise, that went out of Eden, or came from the upper extremities of that country,*

* See Dr. Dodd in Loco.

† Rev. xxi, 22.

*to water the garden below. And in like manner, from the same source, we find the prophets borrowing their ideas of happiness. Thus, in the figurative description of Tyre, in its once flourishing state, most of the images are Paradisiacal: Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering; the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, the carbuncle, and the gold.**

THIS terrestrial Paradise being forfeited by the original progenitors, for themselves and all their posterity, and the very traces of it, by time and various successive devastations, obliterated from the earth, the only thing remaining for us the sons of men, is to seek for another, which hath everlasting foundations, and whose beauty, riches and happiness, nothing in the universe can waste or destroy. And where this place of divine pleasure lies, it is not so difficult, though it be invisible and remote, to explore, as is the situation of *Eden*, once a sensible object, and the seat of every temporal, as well as every moral delight. There is only a veil of flesh between Saints and the true Paradise of God, *where the tabernacle of God shall be fixed among them for ever, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he shall be their God; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their forehead, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; and they that serve him shall be before the throne of God, day and night in his temple†.*

* Ezek. xxviii, 13.

† Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

DISSERTATION IV.

OF THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE.

GENESIS II.

THE bringing every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air to Adam, to see what he would call them, seems to have been previous to the formation of the Woman; and the view of the Creator, in this act, besides the reasons already mentioned, probably was, that Adam, our first father, having surveyed all the animals, and observed that they were created in pairs, for the *increase of their several kinds, that the earth, the air, and the waters might be replenished*, might be sensible of his own solitary, destitute condition, and of the importance of his being also provided with a mate suitable to his nature, which, by reason of its superior excellence, could not be matched with any of the brutal race; in short, that there was wanting to him, a companion in body and mind, fit to cohabit with him, for mutual converse, delight, comfort, and assistance, especially for propagating a reasonable offspring, without which the world would have been stocked with irrational creatures only.

OF

Of each species of these, it has been said; there were created two, distinct from each other in their origin, and of different matter; intimating to us, it may be presumed, the natural incapacity of affection, which their wise Creator intended they should lie under, and the absolute dissoluteness, in point of social obligations, and animal sensations, in which they were to spend their existence. While, on the contrary, as being more fitting, perhaps more agreeable to the true nature of things, the formation of the Woman was accompanied with a circumstance expressive of the nearness of that relation, which was to be the fountain of the existence of all mankind, and of all the dear and intimate relations, so beneficial and comfortable to the life of man. *The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh, where the opening was made: And the rib which the Lord God had taken from Man, made he a Woman.* Thus, being taken out of a part of Adam's body, Eve became another self to him; and this was intended as a document to all posterity, that a wife should be regarded and treated under this delicate and just notion.—Hence St. Paul infers, as *no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it; so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself**.

In the words of this relation, particularly at the 23d verse, we are more than obscurely informed, that God intimated to Adam that he would create a companion meet for him. This, at least, is certain,

* Eph. v. 28. 29.

that Adam had afterwards communicated to him, the manner in which Eve derived her existence from him. For, says he, *she was taken out of man.*

THE notion that Adam had thirteen ribs on each side, and that God took away one pair, with the muscular parts that adhered to them, and out of them made Eve, may be received or rejected at every one's pleasure*. Though, if it was decent to indulge raillery on the occasion, it might be asked what became of the *vertebræ* to which those ribs were joined; seeing if it remained there must needs have been a large space of soft flesh on either side, and if it was removed also, another miracle must have been wrought to preserve Adam's life, as the spinal marrow must have been broken, which passes through that channel. This much we know, that he who created man out of the dust of the ground, and can create all things out of nothing, as was observed in the first Dissertation, could as easily have formed Eve from other materials, as from a rib out of Adam's side; but, by this method, not only perfect love and union are more effectually inculcated; but also the high wrought and delicate frame of woman is demonstrated, seeing, if we may be allowed the expression, the original clay of which she was made, passed, as it were, twice through the great Creator's refining hands.

WHEN the Lord God brought the Woman, his wife, to the man, and told him how she was produced, Adam, hitherto incompleat in his happiness, without

* Bartholin. hist. anatom.

an help meet for him, said, with great love and thankfulness towards his divine benefactor, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, the dearest, the most necessary, and useful of all creatures to me; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

THIS may be either understood in a literal sense, as referring to the manner of Eve's formation; or more generally, as expressing only nearness of relation, and proximity of blood; in the same manner as when Laban says to Jacob, *surely thou art my bone and my flesh*, my near relation; and Abimelech addressed his mother's brethren, saying, *Remember, I pray you, that I am your bone and your flesh*, your kinsman and brother.

SHE *shall be called Woman*; she shall partake of my name, as she does of my nature, being taken almost from my heart; and having both of us one common origin, one denomination shall be common to us both.

It has been observed, that the agreement of the names of persons, with the names of things from which they have been derived, is one of the main arguments offered in proof, that the Hebrew is the original, or at least, a dialect of the original language. The instance before us is, the man was called Adam, from Admah, the ground from whence he was taken; the woman was called Ashè, from Aish man, out of whose side she was extracted: which analogy is lost, if we take the names in other languages*.

* See Shuckford, vol. 1, page 121.

THESE two *Hebrew* words, at least shew us, that as a part belongs to any substance from whence it was taken, or as a member belongs to its proper body, so was the woman essentially the man's, and in whom he justly claimed a property. *And therefore said the Lord God*, as our blessed Saviour explains it, in the 19th chapter of St. Matthew, *shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

FROM this passage arises another evidence, according to a celebrated Divine †, that Adam was favoured with many revelations from God, especially in regard to the matters which it concerned him to know in his infant and primitive state. And indeed how could he possibly have any idea of father and mother, before there was any such thing as a father and mother in the world, unless God had instructed him, that though he and Eve had come into it miraculously, the rest of mankind were to be produced in another way, and a variety of relations formed agreeable to the will of God, for carrying on the great purposes of his providence to the end of time.

HERE then is the institution of marriage; an ancient, sacred, and honorable ordinance, of high distinction, and very nearly connected with the dignity and happiness of the human race. It sprung not originally from libidinous desires, nor selfish worldly interests, but was the express law and appointment of the Creator. An *help meet* for Adam was necessary; he loved Eve as soon as he saw her, and maintained

† Dean Delany's Rev. Exam. page 20.

his affection, and Eve as quickly and constantly resented his tenderness. The labors of the day, and the homages of their great Lord, were willingly shared by the pleased, and the pleasing partners, and their nights spent in the softest dalliances. It is said, *they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.* Shame, says a profound writer*, *is an uneasiness of the mind, upon the thought of having done something which is indecent, or will lessen the valued esteem which others have for us; and even then is not always accompanied with blushing.* It was impossible, therefore, that our first parents, in their state of perfection, could have known or felt any thing of the passion of shame. Wherefore should they blush? and if we have any difficulty in comprehending this circumstance of the sacred history, it is because the greatest part of men's judgments since the fall, is vitiated by sin, and we have equally lost the notions of true shame, and of true honor †.

THIS subject cannot be dismissed without various reflections, and unfolding the chief duties arising out of the close relation we have been speaking of.

Now, it is plainly declared, by God's making one man and one woman only, that this relation was to subsist between no more than two parties at the same time. The prophet Malachi ‡ argues thus from it: *and did not he make one? one man, and one woman, who is his companion, and the wife of his covenant; as a*

* Locke, Vol. 1. Chap. 20. Sect. 17.

† M. Saurin, Dis. ii.

‡ Malachi, ii. 14, 15.

rule to all mankind that should descend from them; *Yet had he the residue of the spirit, and could then have created more wives for Adam, or more men and women in general, if promiscuous commerce had been for the greater happiness of the world. And wherefore, the prophet adds, did he make but one? That he might seek a godly seed: that man and woman in holy wedlock,, in sincere and undivided affection, might propagate a pure race, for the honor and service of God. Therefore take heed to your spirits, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth,*

IT is true, indeed, in the earliest periods of the old dispensation, many of the patriarchs had, not only *two sorts of wives*, but also several of those sorts at the same time, both of whom were reputed *lawful and true wives*, and their children accounted *legitimate*, in certain degrees. The one sort was called by the Hebrews, *primary-wives*, married with the requisite nuptial rites and ceremonies; the other *secondary*, or *half-wives*; in our English translation *concubines*, and not unfitly from the Hebrew word *pillagschim*, which sometimes signifies *an infamous strumpet, or common harlot*.

BETWEEN those *concubines* and *primary-wives*, there were these differences; that whereas the *chief-wife* received from her husband at the espousals, certain *gifts and tokens*, as *pledges of the contract*; and a *bill of writing*, or *matrimonial letters*; and had full authority as *mistress* in the household government; *concubines* neither received *presents*, nor any *obligation*, nor had the least legal management in affairs; only a *right to the marriage bed*, and to have their children acknowledged

ledged, who were yet excluded from the inheritance*, but capable of gifts and legacies; Gen. xxv. 5.

BUT, says one of the fathers of the church, the customs of mankind can never give a sanction to any thing not founded on divine authority †. Now such practices being contrary to the law of nature, if God ever positively permitted them, it was by a special dispensation, as in the case of sacrificing Isaac, and spoiling the Egyptians. Many have contended, that being inconsistent with the original institution of marriage, this was a liberty entirely usurped ‡.

HENCE, from this subject, may fairly be deduced, an argument against *poligamy* and *concubinage*, publicly practised at this day in many nations of the world. The abettors of this custom, sometimes defend it, or at least apologize for it, by alleging that it is not a moral transgression, and that it tends to the multiplication of the human species; To whom the reply is obvious, that even admitting the last proposition, which is by no means clear, *we are never to do evil that good may come*; especially when the action evidently crosses the command of God, which, though published with regard to a positive institution itself, is always of sufficient authority to direct and govern us. And the question of morals, in this, as well as in many other matters, is not so much what may, or may not, be done, as what is prescribed by the law of God, and

* Godwyn's Aaron and Moses, p. 228.

† St. Aug.

‡ Synop. Critic. Poli, in Loco.

visibly hurtful and wicked, on account of its influence on society, and its vitiating effects on the minds of its individual members. And where God Almighty has consulted the interests or perfection of either, we ought to be so far from violating, or repining at his regulations, that we ought to thank him for his kindness, and gladly follow his will.

On the same principle is *divorce* as unwarrantable, except for the cause, on the part of the woman, of which our Lord has made mention, in the forecited 19th Chapter of St. Mathew; where, from the words of God to our first parents, and the nature of the matrimonial tie, he shews, notwithstanding the indulgence Moses gave, *because of the hardness of men's hearts*, in the iron age of the world, that *from the beginning it was not so*; nor till sinners had so corrupted their way on the earth, as to forget and disregard the divine statutes, which he declares to be one of the ends of his coming, to revive, enforce, and fulfil.

It is, indeed, allowed that there are cases, where a man may suffer as much injury and vexation, and, perhaps, more, through the length and irremediableness of other misfortunes, from his wife, as when she breaks the matrimonial faith, and violates her chastity; and yet a dissolution of the nuptial band is not permitted; because all the other miseries she may occasion in a family, are to be considered as so many trials and tribulations wherewith human life is full, for the discipline and improvement of her common partner, and to which, under this view, and to this end, he ought to submit. But a failure in the
instance

instance of fidelity, in regard to the husband's bed, breaking in on the established order of human affairs, and rendering property, succession, and every relation doubtful, the righteous governor has there interposed his authority, in relief of the immediate sufferer, and for the general good permitted an entire and perpetual separation.

THUS are mankind brought into the world with solemnity, if we may be allowed the phrase, and have their procreation and birth settled by important prescriptions, suitable to their peculiar excellence.

WERE there no such rules, we may easily imagine, considering the weakness and imperfection of infancy, in what a deep ignorance, and great dissoluteness of manners, all of us would necessarily grow up to manhood. How important must good discipline and instruction be! Was the race of men produced in a vagrant, licentious manner, without well-known parents to own them, and, with tender care and affection, to give them an early education, this world, most certainly, would exhibit a scene, infinitely more wild and disorderly, than hath ever been seen among the brutes, or we can possibly imagine. Surely the production of an intelligent being, in the most helpless and exposed circumstances, and in no otherwise than by the most painful culture, grows up to a due degree of understanding, ought to be tutored with every requisite advantage in the propagators power. And, therefore, the procreation of the human species, according to the true nature of things, ought to be guarded and directed by the best exercise of reason, and is not to be
the

64 DISSERTATION IV.

the effect of a wanton thought, or the mere gratification of a sensual appetite. God, at the first, said, *let us make man*, expressing a particular counsel and concern about his formation ; and, consequently, the ordinary generation of man, should not be a matter of sport, or of lawless passion. *This*, says a judicious and solid writer *, *is the rule of marriage ; the purpose of the institution, and true decency and sobriety.*

ONE thing more respecting the parties in this conjugal covenant, is observeable, that Adam had no choice ; from which the circumstances of things then debarred him ; and, therefore, being wholly dependent on his maker's Providence, there is much likelihood that Eve, was, in every respect, the most perfect of her kind, and, in the truest sense, *an help meet for him*. But his posterity, having the privilege of choosing their consorts, they are thereby called to the exercise of prudence and wisdom, which there is great need to employ, in fixing a relation so important and lasting. After the coolest deliberations with themselves, the advice and approbation of parents, are in this case, of great moment, as their judgments are generally riper, their views more extensive, and their affectionate regards free from all youthful fervors. And besides ; as marriage lessens the interest of parents in their children, it must be impious to alienate *that* from them, which they hold so dear, and give it to another without their knowledge and consent. Of the fatal consequences of this filial impiety we see the world full, and hoary locks sinking into the earth under them ; while a

* See Dr. Taylor's Scheme, on the Institution of Marriage.

vagabond life, and penury and disgrace prove the wages of the child's disobedience. Nor should parents, on the other hand, unreasonably oppose the inclinations of their children, through ambition, caprice, or covetousness, which may produce a multitude of sorrows to themselves, and great infelicity to their children, of which they will be the principal authors.

WHEN this sacred knot is tied, the husband owes the wife the most tender and affectionate love.—Not to repeat over again the comparison already used by St. Paul, which requires this, there is another to the same purpose in his writings, of extreme force, taken from the intimate communion of Christ with his church, and the ardent love which he hath testified towards it. *Even so, saith that Apostle*, ought men to love their wives, as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it: and we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones: This is a great mystery; but not greater concerning Christ and his church, than that which is formed in consequence of the union between husband and wife. Therefore ought husbands to forbear every thing rude and shocking to their wives, which may injure their minds or bodies, and embitter their lives; and cherish and comfort them, as the head of believers, and the saviour of the spiritual body of christians protects them, and restrains and conquers all things that are hurtful to them. Hence those husbands who tyrannize over their wives, and scarcely treat them as if they were their own species, ought to consider if they be christians, when they disregard*

* Ephesians, v. 23, 32.

this precept of divine authority. Let them even consider if they be men, when the softness and innocence of female nature, have lost their power of charming them into mildness and compassion.

THE husband ought, next, to share with his wife all the good things wherewith God hath endued him; and neither, through avarice, deny her what is necessary, nor, through dissipation, so to impoverish her, that she shall not have wherewithal to subsist herself. And to this bodily provision of the wife, and other external accommodations, the husband must add her instruction, in matters especially which concern her salvation. St. Paul commands women to *learn from their husbands at home*, which supposes that their husbands ought to teach them. Indeed every head of a family is bound to communicate to every one under his care, such knowledge as is suitable to their capacities, of *the things pertaining to godliness*, and particularly to his wife, who is much nearer than all the rest. And this should make every man careful to be instructed himself, that he may be qualified to discharge his duty to another.

BUT as performances are not exacted on the one side only, let us view the duties of wives towards their husbands also. The wife then, first of all, owes obedience to her husband, as is declared in many passages of God's word, especially by the same Apostle, St. Paul, who saith, *wives obey your husbands in all things*; that is, in all things lawful, and consistent with the commandments of God; this being the rule of obedience to *kings themselves, and all who are in authority*, and every superior whatever.

In

In all things not contrary to this rule, the precept will take place; and, therefore, condemn the obstinacy and imperiousness of many women, who disobey their husbands lawful commands, for no other reason, but because subjection is mortifying to them, though God has expressly enjoined it. If ever it should happen, as it often may, that the husband demands compliance in what may be even improper and inconvenient, the wife ought then meekly to submit, without noise or opposition; and, when a fit opportunity occurs, perhaps her expostulations may convince, and reform the husband of his mistake. And even when intreaties and friendship are unsuccessful, the wife is never to usurp government, nor refuse obedience to the man; seeing no case gives her a right to do it, but when the execution of her husband's order would be sinful.

WIVES ought, moreover, to be faithful to their husbands, in regard to sobriety and pure manners, and the management of affairs entrusted to them. In this way chiefly, as well as in the other parts of their conversation, are they to testify their tender and cordial love. To comfort and assist them in all states and conditions, either of health or sickness, of opulence or poverty, which God's providence shall allot to them, is their indispensable duty: A conduct quite opposite to untowardness, turbulence, anger, peevishness, and other wicked humors, which render a woman insupportable, and a plague in a man's house, instead of an *help* and consolation to him. Nor let wives think of justifying their conduct by the faults of their husbands; for neither conscience nor sound policy can excuse them. It

is the absolute command of God, that they obey—and refusing to do this, how much do they often lose. How many men, to avoid the clamor and insolence of their wives, have had recourse to companies, which have brought on an habit of intemperance, reduced them to poverty, and been the occasion of innumerable misfortunes? Let every woman, therefore, be cautious of exposing her husband to such temptations; and when any thing happens, which may call for her advice, let it be given, through the affection she bears to her husband, with all imaginable modesty; let friendship appear in it, and nothing like authority; at which the spirit of every man must revolt, who is at all fit or worthy to govern himself.

Thus are husbands and wives reciprocally bound, by the divine authority, to perform duties respectively becoming them; and which they are to discharge, with all readiness and alacrity, being mutually benefited, and as they expect God's blessing upon them.

D I S S E R T A T I O N

OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE SABBATH

GENESIS II.

THIS THEN IS ONE OF THE FIRST AND OBJECT OF GOD'S

WHEN the Heavens and the Earth were finished, and all the host of them, on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and rested from all his work which he had made: And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.

THE rest here mentioned has been made the subject of mirth and pleasantry by men of light and irreligious turns of mind, as if the God of Moses, after six days labour, had been tired and fatigued with his work, and stood in need of relaxation. But, all this banter apart, which deserves no serious reply, the words of the historian mean no more than this; that God having finished the great work of creation, agreeable to the plan laid in the divine mind, ceased to act; proceeded no farther in the production of more beings.

THIS

THIS *sanctifying the seventh day*, signifies the distinguishing it from the other six days, by setting it apart to the purposes of religion: in like manner as Jeremiah*, in after times, was sanctified from his mother's womb; that is, appointed and ordained by God to be a prophet in Israel. And this *sanctification*, or consecration of the sabbath to that holy use, was his *blessing* it, and commanding it to be observed, as a day of blessing and praising himself, for all his works of power and goodness, and his bestowing blessings on all his pious worshippers.

THIS then is one of the first and oldest of God's institutions, and so must needs have a real foundation in the nature of man, and an intimate connection with the great and the excellent ends of his creation. Those ends certainly are, to attain the knowledge, and to be confirmed in the love and obedience of God, in order to our being qualified for a more perfect state hereafter. But as a due and prevailing sense of these duties and rewards, cannot be preserved on our minds, without repeated and solemn application of thought, and as the affairs and necessities of the present life are so solicitous and importunate for our regards, as would engross our whole attention, were there no methods of employing ourselves otherwise; it is, therefore, necessary, in the nature of things, that some certain time should be specially and publicly appropriated to the exercises of religion, of instruction, prayer and praise, that our minds may be called off from temptations and sin,

* Jer. i. 5.

and seasoned with goodness and comfort. And, doubtless, he who made us for such improvements, and a blessed destination, hath wisdom and authority sufficient to fix that portion of time, which is most proper and competent for those several good purposes.

But that the subject may be treated at greater length, let us take a general view of the Institution of the sabbath, in regard to the observance of it in the several ages of the world; and the care that has been taken to preserve it. Now that our first parents, if they continued so long in innocence, kept the sabbath, as it periodically returned, in acts of lowly and grateful homage, to their and the world's maker and Lord, conformable to his orders, we have not the smallest ground to doubt; nor need we question their practice, in regard to this, even after their fall, seeing their *repentance* appears to have been so deep and sincere; and perfectly recollecting the institution, *disobedience*, the effects of which they had lately so fatally experienced, would naturally fill them with horror. Nor is it unlikely, that it was on the weekly sabbaths, the sons of Adam presented their offerings before the Lord: For though in our english translation the words are, *and in process of time it came to pass*, the Hebrew is, *at the end of days**, probably meaning that as time revolved, there were fixed and determinate portions of it, when Adam's family assembled to worship God, who, they knew positively, had given them life, and was daily blessing them with an increase of fruits and flocks, for their sustenance and happiness.

* Heb. *וּבְעֵצְמָהּ* *in its season*

It is true indeed, from the Mosaic records we receive no support to these conjectures, where there is not the least mention made of the sabbath, from the first institution of it, through the whole tract of the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, on which a direct proof of its observance can be founded. As little, however, can any one, on account of this omission, no way material to the history, assert, that the antediluvians and patriarchs, did not observe the sabbath; much less that the law concerning it, was not all that time well-known, and in full force. For we find not the least intimation of the sabbath in all the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the two Samuels, and the first Kings; though those books were written after the Jewish monarchy was formed, at least the last of them, and when the law of the sabbath was in all its strength, and most scrupulously obeyed. But the book of Genesis itself, though containing but a very summary relation, and even admitting that the mention of the sabbath is not express in it, is yet not without some hints considerably clear, respecting its observance: Thrice Noah sent the dove out of the ark, after he had waited, every time, seven days: And we read of Jacob's fulfilling Leah's week; plainly shewing, that before the flood, and many generations after it, good men at least, reckoned by *seven days*, or *weeks*; who could derive their calculation from no other supposable original, than the institution of the sabbath at the creation.

THERE is no necessity to deny, and the case no doubt was so, that as mankind, from Cain the first murderer, degenerated daily, till *all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth*, at the deluge, this command
of

of God, like the rest of his laws, would be greatly disregarded, and generally violated; as also by the descendants of Noah, who soon fell into idolatry, and forgot the institutions which their progenitors had transmitted to them. Accordingly we find the Israelites, during their continuance and servitude for 215 years, in Egypt, where the true God was not known, had lost their reckoning of the sabbath, having been constrained, by perpetual and most servile labour, to neglect the observance of it. Wherefore, when God brought them up out of that land, he ordered them to begin a new reckoning, and that the sabbath should be regulated by the falling of the manna. *And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare the manna which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily; For to-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: Ye shall not then find it in the field; six days shall ye gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, there shall be none.** This appointment, in regard to the manna, was wise and gracious, as it settled the day, which, otherwise, the Israelites, having lost their computation, during their long captivity, might not have easily been engaged to agree upon. And a regulation so invariable for forty years together, till their establishment in Canaan, would, of itself, distinguish the sabbath, and secure respect to it; for having little more to do, the greatest part of their time, but to gather and dress manna for their subsistence, and seeing no manna fall on the seventh day, they would, of course, be certified of the return of the sabbath, and obliged to rest from the smallest labour. Thus the first point of religion

* Exodus, 16.

that was settled, after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, was the restoring and ascertaining the sabbath, conformable to its original institution, as being of the greatest moment; for at this time they were only in the wilderness of *Zin*, on the borders of the red Sea, and did not march on to mount Sinai for three months afterwards.

THEN, at that place, the ordinance of the sabbath was, with the greatest solemnity, made a part of the moral law of God, enforced with the same sanction, and the ancient reason for its observance expressly specified. *Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.* And being thus placed among the other great articles of our duty, which are of unchangeable obligation, and always referred and appealed to by Christ, and his apostles, as binding upon us Christians, the sabbath must stand upon the same ground, and lay an obligation upon our consciences. For the same lawgiver, who said, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me; thou shalt not bow down to any graven image; thou shalt not take the name of God in vain; honor thy father and thy mother; and do no murder;* said also, *Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy* *.

THE other sabbaths celebrated by the Jewish nation, so called only as they were seasons for rest, which the word strictly signifies, our Lord, indeed, abolished, when the substance was come, of which they were no more than the shadows: And it is in re-

* Rom. xiii. 9.

spect of these that St. Paul speaks to the Colossians, when he says, *Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the sabbath-days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ* †; that is to say, in matters that were local, temporary, and ceremonial, and to be set aside by a more perfect and spiritual dispensation. But the sabbath, properly so called, and the seventh portion of our time, being appropriated for the support and encouragement of what is invariable, was before all the levitical institutions, and therefore not to be abrogated with them. On the contrary, our Lord claimed dominion over the sabbath, when he said to the Pharisees, that *The Son of man was Lord of it*; intimating, that it belonged to his kingdom, the Christian dispensation, together with other new ordinances, which he was to introduce into it.

IN consequence of this, our Lord, reforming the traditionary corruptions of several of the commandments of the moral law, corrected most signally, remarkably and constantly, at the peril of his life, the abuses of the fourth commandment, arising out of the ceremonious sanctity, and hypocritical superstition of the Jewish rulers, which he never would have done, if the sabbath had been an ordinance, that was to expire in a little time with the rest of the *commandments of men*. This amounts to a demonstration that the sanctification of the sabbath was to be of perpetual obligation, and to have the greatest influence on religion.

† Coloss. ii. 16, 17.

THE only difference he made in the institution was, the removal of the sabbath, from the seventh, to the first day of the week. For in the apostolic history we read, that the disciples met together on that day, as being a new festival, to break bread, or celebrate the holy supper, in commemoration of their Lord's triumph over the grave, which is the proper and distinguishing worship of Christians. This observance of the first professors of that name, originated, we may be assured, from an express injunction of the apostles; and the apostles could not possibly issue such an injunction without a commission from their master, though that commission be omitted in their writings; in the same manner as Moses makes no mention of the sabbath in the first ages of the world.

HERE it may not be improper to make a remark, in regard to the word sabbath itself. Be it therefore observed that sabbath, as it is always used, both in scripture and ecclesiastical writers, is constantly applied to the Jewish sabbath, or Saturday; and consequently there must be some absurdity in calling our Lord's day by that name. Indeed if any foreigner, from infidel nations, who had been instructed in the theory of the Mosaic economy, heard us express ourselves in this manner, he would verily believe that we meant Saturday, and not Sunday. But yet, notwithstanding this inaccuracy, seeing it is a custom among us to call the Lord's day by the name of sabbath, we need not quarrel about the use of the word, which signifies only a day of rest in general

general, on whatever day it falls; and the new sabbath plainly affords this to all Christians*.

But to return to the general view of this institution; there have been evidently three dates, from which the holy sabbath hath been reckoned; the *first*, by the the antediluvians and patriarchs, from the day after creation was finished; the *second*, by the Jews, from the the first day of the falling of the *manna*, when they were fed with bread from Heaven; and the *third*, by the christian Church, from the first day of the gospel dispensation. But still it is the seventh day which *God blessed*, and the day we now observe is as much, and as truly, the sabbath which *God sanctified*, as ever it was from the beginning of the world.

Nothing more needs to be advanced in proof of the antiquity, importance, and sacredness of this divine institution; than which there is none that can claim an higher origin, or produce better authority for its universal and perpetual obligation on all mankind: And, therefore, the guilt of that person, or nation, that violates it, must be equal to the dignity which the great commandment of the sabbath holds among the laws of its author. How, indeed, can men possibly forget, or profane it, who profess any regard to the other precepts of the Almighty, is altogether unaccountable. Such open neglects and abuses of it, could not be believed, if they were not so common, and, by custom, almost established.

* Archbishop Sharp, vol. 3. Sermon 3. Dub. edit. 1744.

THE primary intention of the sabbath was, that it might be a day of rest, or cessation from all the ordinary business of life. And a most happy expedient it is, when men's minds are abstracted from worldly cares and pursuits, for propagating the knowledge of religious truth, which could never have been so fatally corrupted or lost, in any age of the world, as it is has so universally and repeatedly been, if the sabbath had been duly observed, agreeably to it's first institution. To the purposes of religion it has been constantly applied by the faithful, under all the dispensations of light and grace, and proved efficacious in proportion as it has been thus employed. *The Lord hath given you the sabbath**, said Moses to the Israelites, *and ye shall keep my sabbath, and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord†*. Accordingly through the whole of the old testament, it is represented as *an holy convocation*, when that people assembled for divine worship. On this day they met together at *the tabernacle first*, and next at the temple, and in all the synagogues through the land, for the exercises described in many of the *psalms*, particularly, in the *ninety-second*, where the affairs of the state, at that time, are solemnly represented before God, and a special dependance expressed on his providence. These meetings our blessed Lord honored; and sanctified the sabbath-day by his presence and instructions. And every denomination of christians, that deserve the name, for an ingenuous and undisguised profession of it, have, at all times, and in all places, assembled on the sabbath, to hear the word of God read to them, to

* Exod. 16. 29.

† Levit. 19. 30.

offer up their prayers and thanksgivings, and to celebrate the Lord's supper, perhaps two seldom celebrated by modern christians, in order to employ their thoughts in pious meditations, and furnish their minds with the best principles and dispositions. Services which cannot but require rest from ordinary business, and the whole of our minds and attention to be laid out on the spiritual concerns of the day.

It is indeed to be noticed in this place, that our Lord, in his instructions and example, concerning the sanctification of the sabbath, has distinctly taught us, not to introduce any thing superstitious into the observance of it, after the manner of the Jews, as if we conceived it to be such a scrupulous rest, that we may not do any thing fit and reasonable to be done, and which it is otherwise our duty to do. And, consistently with this doctrine, certain divines have very properly taught, that *the sabbath is to be sanctified by an holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.* At the same time that we worship God, give him thanks, call upon him, and honor his holy name and word, on that day, whatever cannot be delayed till another, without loss or damage, may certainly be taken care of on the sabbath day. Our Saviour says, *the sabbath was made for man* *, that is, to be subservient to his improvement and happiness; and, therefore, the observance of it imposed on him, cannot be of so rigorous a nature, as to embarrass

* St. Mark, ii. 27.

and distress his life, or make him neglect any opportunity of doing good.

But of such an abuse of the sabbath as this, in an age of great licentiousness and impiety, there being very little danger, admonition to those who neglect and profane it will be much more necessary, than a caution against any such scruples. Now the obligation and duties of this day having been clearly set forth, must not men, on a comparison of them with the manner in which it is usually spent, be struck with astonishment, and filled with sorrow? The sabbath ought to be an holy rest*, and yet do not multitudes make it a day of hard labour, at least of high living, great mirth, and public diversions? *It is a day for worshipping God*, in public and private; and, nevertheless, it is but too evident, that attendance in his house is infrequent and circumscribed by many, who make an outward profession the sum of their religion; and it is to be feared likewise, that all such persons, and, perhaps many others, through inattention, negligence, and the wilful want of knowledge and conviction in matters of the greatest moment, are entire strangers to the duties of the closet also. So prevailing, in short, are the evils of this kind, that men have grown so insensible of them, and are so far lost to all disposition to reclaim themselves, that every attempt to awaken and reform them, is thought to proceed from weakness and folly,

* *Septima autem requievisse Deum (Moses facta esse dicit) et ab operibus cessaviss.* Quamobrem etiam nos vacationem a laboribus per hanc Diem celebramus, appellantes eum Sabbathum, quæ vox Requiem Hebræorum Lingua Significat. Joseph. Lib. 1. Cap. 2.

to be officious and ill-natured, and the common trade and business of *Ecclesiastics*. But will they only seriously consider with themselves, and candidly confess, that if confinement, through the week, and the want of recreation on the sabbath, would soon hurt and endanger the health of their bodies; what *that* of their souls must be, if they think they have any, without receiving the nourishment, from the exercises proper for them. Must they not, as certainly as the material frame, decay and finally perish? And, no doubt, the want of such nourishment is the cause of so much *leanness and barrenness*, even among those who profess the greatest strictness, and yet fall in exactly with the manners of the multitude, and *follow them to do evil*; and whose practices, universally giving the lie to their pretended principles, instead of encouraging, throw a damp on all improvements in religion.

THE last thing to be suggested on the subject is this; that if the law of *nature*, of God, and of Christ, obliges us to pay tribute to whom tribute is due, and custom to whom custom; and yet hath not determined the measure of every man's ability and conscience in that matter; making it, however, criminal in him to refuse compliance with public authority; how much more may that man be said to sin against God, who hath, by the most immediate revelation, prescribed certain days, and the returns of them, if he defraud him of that portion of time, which he hath so solemnly consecrated and devoted to himself? No transgression against a canon, or an

act of Parliament, can be so gross and penal; and the offence cannot possibly go unpunished, either in this world, or in the world to come. And that it may be so, **LET ALL THE PEOPLE SAY, AMEN.**

DISSERTA.

DISSERTATION VI.

OF A STATE OF TRIAL; AND THE FALL OF MAN.

GENESIS II.

ADAM and Eve, placed in Paradise, did not long enjoy their honour and happiness. Efforts of malice were soon made to mar the original purpose, and proved too successful in their fatal mistake and overthrow. The hints of scripture concerning the great enemy of mankind, are but short, and seem to be reducible to these several heads of doctrine :

THAT he had been formed, like other celestial beings, perfect in his kind, and happy in his condition : That he was guilty of some crime, in his exalted sphere ; which the learned, however, with their various conjectures, have not been able to define ; tho', probably, ambition and insolence might be the principal ingredients of it : That the certain consequence was disgrace and misery ; for the Almighty banished him and his accomplices, from their habitations of glory, into the middle regions of the air, as it is thought ; where they are fixed in a manner inexplicable to men, who have no distinct idea how pure

spirits disengaged from matter, if any such there be, except God himself, can possibly be confined : That this arch-traitor is *prince of the power of the air* *, and his companions *spiritual wickednesses in high places* †, *cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness* ‡; or, as many intepret the word, *Tartarus*, which celebrated critics understand to be, as has been already said, the middle region of the air ||: That in this abode, wherever it is, they wait for their decreed doom, which, probably, will not be declared till the last day : That this procrastination of their final and permanent misery, is the only happiness which they at present enjoy; inferable from their alarm at the coming of the Son of God, when, dreading the period of their punishment was hastened, they said to him, at their expulsion from the bodies of men which they had possessed, *Art thou come to torment us before the time* § ? that is, before the period of our accumulated and eternal ruin : That, from the words of our Saviour, who speaks of *a fire prepared for the devil and his angels* **, we are warranted to draw the conclusion, that their punishment, though suspended in part, will be compleatly executed : That God *has*, actually, *reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day* ††; and they were seen, in a vision, *cast into the lake of fire and brim-*

* Eph. ii. 2.

† Eph. vi. 12.

‡ 2 Pet. ii. 4.

|| Voyez Suidas, Tom. 3. p. 432.

§ St. Matthew, viii. 29.

** St. Matthew, xxv. 41.

†† St. Jude, verse 6.

stone, to be tormented day and night, for ever and ever *.

AND if this be all which revelation affords us on the subject, it must be because it is less our concern to know the nature and destination of those evil spirits, than to be aware of the snares which they lay for our innocence, that we may exercise all our watchfulness to repulse and disappoint them. *To be sober and vigilant*, is the apostolic precept, *because our adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour* †.

YET, instead of making this useful improvement of those divine and indulgent hints, the sense of them has been so criticised and controverted, that their most important meaning has been greatly enervated, and, indeed, totally explained away, by men who have endeavoured to apply all this language to the *Roman Emperors*, and their *servants*, as they were the rulers and governors of unenlightened and idolatrous nations, in the days of the apostles. But, besides the concurrent testimony of *antiquity*, which is plainly on the side of the commonly received opinion, the words of St. Paul, in the first of the passages under view, may be adduced as a full confutation of all such new-fangled doctrines; there being in these words an obvious distinction between *flesh and blood*, or men who are merely compounded of those materials, and *principalities and powers*, or those evil spirits which have their stations in the regions of the air, preside, peculiarly, and in an eminent degree,

* Rev. xx. 10.

† 1 Pet. v. 8.

over the nations which are yet under *heathenism*, and work inwardly in the children of disobedience.

CONCERNING their origin, their functions in heaven, their apostacy and fall, no other sentiments are to be entertained than what the divine oracles suggest to us; which seem to represent them as very ancient beings*, and literally tell us that they *kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*†, and are condemned to the severe displeasure of the Almighty.

OF the chief of those evil spirits, who could not behold the felicity of others without envy, and, as if misery was more tolerable when shared by many, wished to seduce them into rebellion similar to his own, that they might partake with him in the same punishment; of this head, I say, of the evil spirits, our first parents soon experienced the subtle and destructive malice. To Eve, who he, possibly, well knew possessed more levity, and a stronger inclination to vain glory, than her husband, his first addresses were made: And as there can be no conversation with spiritual beings without material organs, he borrowed the body and voice of that particular animal, which of all others hath the most vivacity and alertness, that she might be the less surprized at hearing it speak with understanding. The animal meant was a serpent; and the pretext used appeared the most plausible to make Eve withhold, in one instance at least, the obedience which she owed to her Creator, and wise and most benign lawgiver.

* See Dissertation first.

† Jude, verse 6.

DISSERTATION VI. 87

IN that garden where the first pair were placed, of all sorts of fruit there was the greatest plenty; and they were permitted to make the freest use of them all, for their sustenance and pleasure, and as a reward for their labour, except of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*; for, said God, *in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. There was another tree, besides this, in the midst of the garden, or, as the eastern phrase signifies, distinguished remarkably from the rest, and called *the tree of life*. Those two trees were, probably, uncommon in their appearance and situation as well as in their use; having been appointed, it is very likely, for instruction and religious meditation, to preserve in Adam's mind a sense of his dependence on the divine bounty, and of the consequences of obedience and transgression; and may be considered, in regard to him, as revelation, or the written word, is to us, from whence, in his infant state, he was to draw maxims, or general principles, by which he was to direct his conduct.

HERE we are to excite our attention, and pay the strictest regard to this important truth, that the first of the human race, immediately on their creation, were denied a certain thing which was daily within their reach, as an evidence to them that they were in a state of probation. Though they had been *made in the image of him that created them*, and were, like the angels of God, pure and perfect in their nature, suitable to his excellence and goodness from whose hands they came, and the constant and willing service which he required of them; yet being without the confirmed *habits* of holiness, they were put under this instance of discipline, and obliged to perform
voluntary

voluntary acts of respect and submission to their Creator, in order to the acquisition of those habits. While they continued obedient, they were allowed to eat of the tree of life, as a pledge, and perhaps, a principle, of their living for ever, or being immortal. The other tree, on the contrary, was designed to give them the knowledge, the sense or apprehension of good and evil, or of carnal good enduring for a moment, connected with complicated and lasting evil; in short, of pernicious pleasure, which cannot be enjoyed without transgressing the law of God. This tree, it is presumable, entirely indifferent in itself, being yet strongly emblematical of all criminal pursuits, the fruit of it, tho' it was *pleasant to the eye, and to be desired*, our original progenitors were forbidden to eat, upon the pain of death; to make them understand that unlawful enjoyments of any kind would be their destruction. A lesson still forced upon ourselves by experience, and even ever present in our understandings, which ought to guard us against all such presumption, that we may escape the misery of it.

AVAILING himself of this restraint, and with a direct view to detach her from a dutiful submission to it, *the great dragon**, *the old serpent*, *the devil*, or *Satan* †, accosted Eve in the most flattering terms. No room is left in these characters, to doubt what adversary she had to encounter on this occasion. He is here stiled the Serpent for no other reason, but because he had joined himself to that animal, as the Son of God is called Man, because he assumed

* Rev. xii, 19. † Rev. xx, 2.

his nature. His words were these: *Yea! hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? unreasonable, selfish, prohibition! to hinder you of a more extensive happiness! For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: your minds shall be so enlarged by this simple experiment, that ye shall be as gods yourselves, knowing good and evil; and taste pleasures at present denied you without danger; ye shall not surely die. And when the woman saw, or believed the deceiver, that the forbidden tree had the power of making her wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. This was their trial, and failing under it, here ended their innocence and felicity.*

ABOUT the duration of that state, authors of great name have been much divided. Some assert that our first parents fell on the very first day of their creation, and continued only six or seven, or at the longest, ten hours in paradise; others extend the period of their happiness to as many days: For instance, the great primate of Ireland, who says, that it seems to have been the *tenth* day of the world's age, when Adam was cast out of Paradise; in memory of which calamity, the solemn *day of expiation*, and the great *fast* was instituted in after times, whereon all were to afflict their souls*; but he had no other authority for it than the Jewish doctrines grounded on the 16th chapter of Leviticus: while even thirty-four years have been the computation of some learned men†. The opinions of the greatest number rest upon a sup-

* Vide, Usserii annal.

† Salian. annal. Tom. I.

posed resemblance between Adam and Jesus Christ: As the latter fasted forty days in the wilderness, and lived upon earth thirty-four years; so it is to be analogically inferred, say they, that the former was either of those spaces in Paradise. Here revelation is totally silent; and wherever it is, or any way obscure, disputes arise without end. To the opinion of those who limit the state of innocence to a few hours, there are very strong objections; and stronger still to that which lengthens it out to years. Some circumstances of the story, make *years* improbable, on the one hand; and, on the other, a few *hours* appear insufficient for transactions that may very reasonably be supposed to have occurred: And, therefore, a *medium* between parties may be the truest account, and a few weeks or months have been the period of Adam's primeval honor.

THAT an *apple* should be the object in question, Infidels have greatly wondered, and given full vent to their blasphemous ridicule. But was not some instance of human obedience necessary? Was not one test, of whatever sort, as sufficient for that purpose as another? And from whence could any be chosen, but from among the few things with which our first parents were most conversant, in their peculiar circumstances? And the apparent *trivialness* of that which the wisdom of God pitched on, is a plain aggravation of their offence, who unboundedly enjoyed the possession of every thing else; though it may wantonly be the sport of fools. By appointing this trial, a slight abridgment only was intended of their natural liberty, in the uncontrolled exercise of
which

which, it is unfit that any created intelligence should be indulged.

To this reasonable representation the reply usually made, that the temptation must have been too strong, when diabolical artifices, and desperate designs, were opposed to the innocence and unguardedness of our first parents, almost immediately on their coming into the world, is destitute of all solidity, when calmly considered. For no possible temptation could of itself be strong enough, to shake their allegiance, unless the grand adversary had been suffered to personate God himself, which we see he never had power to do. Adam and Eve had lately received a command, in the most express terms, from their almighty maker; which it was, therefore, their duty to obey. If they were ignorant *who* it was that tempted them, they were not ignorant *what* he was tempting them to do; and they knew that if the highest arch-angel from heaven, speaking in his own name, and without any commission from God, endeavoured to persuade them contrary to that command received, they ought to resist his solicitations; because nothing less than the same divine authority which gave the law, could either annul or dispense with it. But no such stumbling block was laid before them; the trial was moderate. God considered their nature, their inexperience, and situation; and only proved them by the sophistry and pretences of *a beast of the field*, whose figure could by no means be subservient to his rhetorick or authority.

RESPECTING *the tree* itself, which produced this apple, though, as has been already declared, it may
be

be considered as perfectly indifferent in itself, and void of any extraordinary quality *, yet the variety of opinions concerning it, which have furnished much amusement and speculation to the *unlearned and unstable* †, may make a few words necessary. It is called by Moses, *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Josephus thinks that it had the physical virtue of producing knowledge and light in the mind of those who eat of it ‡. But perhaps this name was only given it by way of anticipation; or not till after the event had shewn man the difference between *good and evil*; between obeying God and rebelling against him. Whether it was a common apple-tree or a fig-tree, there have been the warmest disputes, without affording the smallest information. The truth is, a determination concerning the nature of that tree, and the reasons of the name it bears, is as difficult, as it is perhaps unimportant.

THE account given of the *tempter* has, likewise, been freely examined by *unbelievers*; and strangely enlarged both by Jewish and Christian commentators. One of the former hath said, that this account, like the other relations in the Mosaic history, hath neither truth nor goodness in it, and is a wretched invention of superstition and blindness, contrary to all reason and common sense §. Such is the boldness of those who refuse to follow every guide, but their own imaginations, disordered and inflamed by corrupted hearts. Another of them says that Cicero laughed at

* Vide F. Turret. Loc. oct. Quest. iv. p. 637.

† St. Pet. 3. 16.

‡ Arbor enim acuminis & cogitandi vis inerat. Jos. L. i. C2.

§ Dr. Morgan.

the story of Alexander's dreaming that a serpent spoke; but how would he have laughed, says he, at the literal story of a serpent not only speaking actually, but reasoning too*. Many of the last classes have entertained the world with the most insupportable opinions; that all beasts at the beginning had the faculty of speech †; that *the serpent* possessed it like the rest ‡; that the devil in this form had carnal commerce with Eve §, or was only riding on this animal, as on a camel ¶, when he presented himself to the mother of mankind; that the serpent perched upon *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, and eating of the fruit, Eve was struck with the sight, and tasted of it in imitation ¶¶; that the language of beasts, becoming only unintelligible to men by their studying one of their own, was perfectly understood by Eve, and that the relation of Moses regarding the conversation of the devil with her, contains no mystery **. There have been authors, who have turned the whole relation into figure and allegory; making the *serpent* represent irregular desire; the *man*, whom he was afraid to assault at first, an image of reason, and the *woman*, who was easily overcome, the emblem of sense, and in the same manner all the rest of the things that are there said ††.

* See Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 17. &c.

† Philo de Confus. Ling. St. Basil, de Paradiso.

‡ Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 2.

§ R. Jarchi in Gen. 2.

¶ Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici. Hor. art. poet.

¶¶ Abarbanel in Gen. cap. 3.

** Joseph Mead, discourse 40.

†† Philo de opif. Mundi. Maimonides, More Nevôchim, Pars.

2. cap. 30.

To the most of these reveries, not the least attention is due; they are only the productions of idle men, and mere lumber in the works of the learned. Borrowed meanings, it must be confessed, would be a compendious way of resolving many difficulties that occur in the sacred records; but would open up the widest source of novelties, in giving a liberty to convert into allegory the most circumstantial histories; when events are related that baffle our comprehension.

A PRELATE, whose merit raised him to the first rank in the church of England, hath suggested an ingenious overture in this matter, which being but little known, pardon for publishing it here will be the more easily procured. There are, says he, in the east and the south, winged serpents which appear like fire: The inspired writers speak of them in a variety of passages. The *mercy of the Lord* having been promised to *the house of Jacob*, *Isaiah*, to guard a part of them against a fatal mistake, says, *rejoice not thou whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent* *. The doctrine conveyed to them is strongly figurative; but the figures are lively, and were undoubtedly taken from nature.

THE serpents which God sent *among his people* of old, to punish them for their murmurings, were of this kind. *The Lord*, says *Moses*, *sent fiery serpents* † *among the people, and they bit the people, and much people*

* *Isaiah*, 14. 29.

† הכתשים חשופים

of Israel died. And, upon their confession, the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live*. The activity and splendor of those animals, intimated in this relation, have been used as an emblem of the zeal and purity of divine beings, who are set forth to us in scripture, as surrounding the throne of God, and filling the places which they visit with the most striking tokens of their desire to please him, and of their readiness to execute his sovereign command †. Hence the learned have been of opinion, that the visible form which those celestial spirits assumed, when they were employed as ambassadors to men, was that of those serpents; and that from this appearance the name of seraphim was derived, which signifies burning. By such a resemblance, therefore, it may be supposed Eve was deceived; and that the dignity of the personage with which she thought she conversed, gave the utmost weight to the words he used §.

ALTHOUGH this illustrious author hath placed this point in a light entirely new, he hath yet the modesty, not to suspect any other passion or affection of the mind, to declare, that, many ages before him, the same doctrine had been taught by others. He hath even referred to a learned Jew, who said,

* Numb. xxi. † Isaiah, vi. 2. Rev. iv. 8.

§ Archbishop Tension, in his Discourse of Idolatry. The author of these Dissertations hath taken the liberty to quote the passages of scripture at large, and to comment upon them. But his Grace's sense is faithfully given.

that

that as the angels of God, of one of the orders, were called *Seraphim**, the serpent had the same name from the likeness he bore to them.

GIVING the credit due to the Arch-bishop's authority, this notion might be the origin of the romantic sentiments of some ancient heretics, who believed that the serpent which tempted Eve, was the son of God himself, and that, thinking he was present, she had sinned out of respect to him †.

SUCH fancies might be easily checked by asking, what idea Eve could possibly have of the Messiah, in a perfect and innocent state, and before he was actually revealed?

BUT, whatever idea she might have of the secret nature of many of the ministers of her maker, yielding to the solicitations of such a creature as a serpent, for no other, we may presume, its outward form indicated it to be, and expecting the accomplishment of the most fulsome promises, must render her, in the judgment of every dispassionate person, highly culpable, with all her reason and understanding about her, and in direct opposition to the express law of God. How extremely negligent were our first parents of their own natural reason? How presumptuous in doing what was positively forbidden?

WHY God should permit such a danger and catastrophe to befall the very first of mankind, is quite another question, and beyond the sphere of our un-

* Heb. שרפים

† Vide Tertul. de pref. Hæret. Cap. 4 & 7. secundum Saur.

derstandings. This, however, we plainly perceive, that every rational creature requires to be put upon trial. The angels themselves were laid under the same rule; and from heedless and voluntary transgression results all the misery in the universe. Farther than this, we have no principles at present, to go upon; the counsels and ways of God being unsearchable by us, and all the subjects of his kingdom; and therefore, the government of his whole accountable family, in a way suitable to their liberty, and his own most perfect wisdom, holiness and purity, being one of the most delicate and mysterious parts of the Almighty's conduct, under this preliminary dispensation, may, most probably, be the study and admiration of angels and men to all eternity.

THIS also is plain, and here all our enquiries may be satisfied, that he who made all his own servants knows perfectly what is in them; and how necessary and seasonable it is that they should undergo suitable discipline. *And this confidence we have in his faithfulness, that he will never suffer any of his creatures to be tempted, either by their station, by wicked spirits, or men, above what they are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, if they be dutiful, that they may bear it*.* This is natural and immutable justice, from which justice infinite and eternal cannot swerve. And this single position, abstract from the foregoing reasoning, assures us, that our first parents were not overcome by violence, which they were not able to resist, and could not but fall before; but by an abuse of their own liberty and

* 1. Cor. x. 13.

free will, and the want of exerting the natural strength they had, sufficient to withstand the temptation.

THE atrociousness of their guilt will clearly appear, by the extent of their punishment, in the following Dissertation.

DISSERTA.

DISSERTATION VII.

OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL.

GENESIS III.

THE original sin having been fully described, the consequences of it require to be as amply unfolded. That a repetition of crimes, can only form the wretched habit of committing them without remorse, is evident, at first sight, from this introductory circumstance; that the conscience of Adam and Eve still remained tender after one very gross violation of it, and instantly reproached them for the first transgression. Their repentance indeed is very briefly characterized; but, from the general account of it, we may fairly conclude, that if the Holy Spirit had been pleased to inform us fully of all the painful effects, which a sense of disobedience immediately produced in the guilty pair, the relation would have been extremely affecting. The sacred history begins that account with simply telling us, that *the eyes of them were both opened*; that is, they had a perception, directly, of the consequences of disobedience, and knew they were degraded and exposed by it; just as sinners, in general, under the influence of a moral

H 2

blindness,

blindness, are totally insensible of the miserable fruits of vice, till they have committed some flagrant act of it, when, the very first moment of reflection, they see the deep traces of their folly, and feel the galling scourges of a self-condemning heart.

THE words following will bear a literal interpretation; *they knew that they were naked*. Their bodies, which had been entirely under the government of their will, became rebellious, as soon as pollution was contracted; and, by the inordinate motions of sense, disturbed that purity of their minds which they had lately possessed. The consciousness of such an alteration within themselves, would unavoidably be productive of confusion.

SOME, indeed, have thought, that a figurative explanation, by which the knowledge of their *nakedness*, is made an image of their conviction, upon the loss of their innocence, would be no way repugnant to the spirit of the expression. In support of this opinion, another similar passage has been produced, where we read, that Moses, after the idolatry of the golden calf, *saw that the people were naked; for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame amongst their enemies* *: Intimating, that the divine protection was withdrawn; for the glory of the Lord in the cloud, it is likely, had departed: And Aaron had laid them open, by this sin, to the scorn of the hostile nations, who should hear of such a scandalous revolt from their God †.

* Exod. 32. 25.

† Bp. Patrick on the place.

THE exposition of these words is certainly very just; but the application of them *, to illustrate the other, is much to be suspected; and the first gloss seems more naturally to claim our regard; as Adam and Eve, on the knowledge of their *nakedness*, were immediately engaged in *sewing fig leaves together*, which, by their magnitude and texture, were proper for the use of *making themselves aprons*.

To the pungent sensations of their own minds, the great avenger of wickedness, soon added his awful voice. *In the cool of the day*, or, agreeable to the original, *the wind* †; and, in the oriental phrase, the decline of the day; when their refreshing winds rushed from the Indian ocean; the presence of the Lord was perceived in Paradise.

THIS is a farther evidence that Jehovah had indulged our first parents, in their innocent state, with intercourse and revelations, in his own person, some way gloriously manifested; and that they were well acquainted with them. But the tokens which signified the divine presence, before the appearance of the Messiah in the flesh, will be hereafter given in their proper place.

LIKE all their descendants, the first criminals confessed their guilt as reluctantly, as they had been eager in the commission of it. When God called *unto* Adam, and said *unto him*, *where art thou?* the fugitive, in the best manner he could, converted the fault, which forced him to retreat, into a virtue. By

* M. Saurin, Discours. 4. † Heb. *וּמִן הַרוּחַ*

way of imposition, after he had rebelled against him, Adam endeavoured to persuade the Almighty, if possible, that it was reverence for his heavenly master which prevented his immediate attendance. *I heard thy voice*, said he, *in the garden; and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself*. His understanding being disordered, and his whole mind confused, the weak imagination prevailed, that if he could not conceal himself from the eye of his judge, he might at least palliate the offence, for which he stood secretly condemned. Accordingly, when pressed farther by the question, *Who told thee that thou wast naked?* he proceeded from one extravagance to another, and threw the blame in part upon God himself, by charging with the temptation *the woman whom God had given to be with him*; as if that gift had been fatal in itself, and drawn him forcibly and irresistibly into transgression. And as he had thus excused himself by the seduction of his wife, Eve imitated his example, and accused the serpent of the original temptation. But excuses of this sort rather aggravate guilt, and generally bring on a speedy retribution.

HAVING been the primary agent, condemnation was first pronounced on the devil; and that every participant in the horrid wickedness, might likewise be involved in the punishment, *the Lord said unto the serpent*, which had been visibly subservient in the execution of it, *Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shall thou go, and dust shall thou eat all the days of thy life*. By this act God declared his detestation of every creature which he had made, concerned in moral transgression; as he did still more expressly, in the law

law afterwards given to the *Israelites*, where it is enacted, *If a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman and the beast; they shall surely be put to death: their blood shall be upon them**: Thus making accessaries in guilt, destitute of understanding, partners with the intelligent principals, in the chastisements inflicted on them.

SOME commentators have softened this part of the sentence, which relates to *the serpent's eating dust all the days of his life*, by supposing the meaning of it only to be, that he should be always under the necessity of eating his food on the ground, and so swallowing dust with it, from the creeping form to which his body was reduced †. But this, not sufficiently distinguishing the curse of the serpent, from the natural condition of other creatures, more diligent enquiries shew to be a mistake, and evince that he actually eats the dry, dusty earth ‡. Indeed in those sandy deserts to which God has, in a great measure, condemned him, no otherwise could he possibly subsist. So strangely is the divine sentence executed in every sense, and in every part, to a tittle!

AND as the expression of *eating the dust*, denotes the lowest state of humiliation to which an enemy can be reduced; as in the Book of Psalms §, where it is prophesied of God's anointed, that *his enemies should*

* Levit. xx. 15, 16. † Saurin Discourse iv,

‡ See Pliny and Bochart of Serpents.

§ Psal. lxxii. 9.

lick the dust; so was the serpent moreover sunk into the abject condition of *going upon his belly*; from a flying *Seraph**, changed into a foul creeping creature, to afford Adam a significant emblem of that utter prostration and subjection, to which he himself deserved to be brought; and the evil spirit, who had seduced him, should, without remedy, be finally doomed, when the great conqueror *shall tread upon the adder, and trample the dragon under his feet*†.

FOR the words immediately following shew us, that a sentence, reaching much farther than that under which the serpent had instantly fallen, was denounced against the devil himself. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* In the most literal sense, indeed, this is true of the serpent, between which and mankind there is such an antipathy, that it discovers itself both in the *natural* and *sensitive* faculties of them both; the humours of the one being poison to the other; and as man is frightened at the sight of a serpent, in like manner is a serpent terrified at the sight of a man ‡.

BUT these natural circumstances, like the foregoing, being only adumbrations of something more secret and hidden, we are, therefore, to seek for a sense of the above words, that is more compleat, and pregnant with instruction. The celebrated *Arabian Jew*, who wrote his *Elucidations* of the *obscurer parts of Scripture*, above six hundred years ago, hath freely confessed, that *this is one of the passages of scripture the most PERPLEXING, and altogether unintelligible, if we stick to*

* Heb. שרף

† Psal. lxi. 13.

‡ Pat. in Loco.

the letter, and do not penetrate the profound wisdom which it contains *. The distinction of *the seed of the woman* without the intervention of the man, has engaged his attention, by its singularity; and some have thought that he found in it the whole mystery of the incarnation †; but without any foundation, in his application of it. Though on very good authority it may be asserted, that the two *Targums*, the one of Jerusalem, and the other by Jonathan, understood by *the seed of the woman* the Messiah.

BUT while such interpreting may, very properly, serve to assist our understandings, and are very illustrious testimonies to the truth of the sacred scriptures, we have far surer ground to go upon, in the explication of the dark, and distant hints those scriptures give us, than any that the most ingenious Jews have afforded. He who pronounced these words at first, hath unfolded their meaning by holy men whom he inspired, and, by their ministry, drawn aside the vail which covered them, before the full accomplishment of the promises which they conveyed, in this present state of truth. The writers of the *new Testament*, by their acquaintance with *the old doctrine*, which they had *heard from the beginning* ‡, and the infallible influence which directed them, have made plain all myste-

* Odium perfectum manet inter serpentem et Evam, inter semen illius et inter semen hujus; neque dubium est, quin semen illius sit semen adami. Sed mirandus magis est,—quod illa vincat ipsum in capite, et ille vincat ipsam in calcaneo.—Secundum literam paradoxis ac absurdis.—Sed si solide intellexeris, admiraberis, quanta sapientia in illo libro lateat, &c.

† M. Saurin, Discours. 4.

‡ 1. John, ii, 7.

ries, if we do not *love darkness rather than light* *. And that this curse, pronounced against the serpent, agreeable to what has been said, was only an emblem of that pronounced against the devil himself, is abundantly clear from their words. St. Matthew informs us that *Jesus was led up of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil* †; when attacks on his power, and the crushing of his kingdom, were just commencing. And the author to the Hebrews, hath represented *the Son of God*, on the other hand, as *destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, through his own death* ‡; which the *God of this world* effected by his malice, *blinding the minds of them who believed not* §.

THESE divine authorities sufficiently instruct us, that by *the seed of the woman*, we are to understand the *Messiah*; and by *the head of the serpent*, the dominion of *satan*, by which he had immersed the human race in idolatry and wickedness, and subjected them to innumerable miseries of life, and to the pains of death at last. *It shall bruise thy head*, expresses the triumphs which our redeemer gained by his ministry, obedience and cross. *Bruising the head*, in profane authors, signifies shaking off the yoke of tyranny. Thus a Theban general encouraged his countrymen to attack a body of the Lacedemonians, by shewing them a serpent's head, which he had compressed, and saying, *See, the serpent's head is crushed, his body can never do us any harm* ||. Now the son of God, in this sense, and by the aptest means, effectually deprived

* John iii. 19.

† St. Matthew iv. 1.

‡ Heb. 2. 14.

§ 2 Cor. 4. 4.

|| Polyæni Strat Epaminon. Lib. ii. Cap. 3.

his enemy of all his destructive influence. And what is most remarkable in his conquests is, that the very wounds which he received in the conflict were the cause of his victory. By these indeed *his heel was bruised*, that is to say, his flesh was crucified, but by submission to that very indignity, and *despising* it, he *spoiled evil principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross**; and chiefly over him who had solicited his death, and imbibited his sufferings.

THE sentence pronounced upon the woman comes, next, to be considered. *Unto her the Lord God said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* On the last part of this sentence, which, it must be owned, merits some regard, it hath been observed, that nothing could be more mortifying to a creature affecting independence, than a positive subjection to another; which every one of her sex, entering into the state of marriage, is required to acknowledge †. And, notwithstanding another sense which an ancient author puts upon the words, that Moses only inserted this, *to preserve the Jews from the infection of the Theology in Egypt, where, impressed with the idea of Isis, the people thought Queens more honourable than Kings, and Women than their Husbands ‡*; whoever consults facts, and the laws of God, already cited, in relation to marriage, will find the above doctrine sufficiently confirmed.

* Coloss. ii. 15.

† M. Saurin Discours. 4.

‡ Diod. Sicul. Lib. i. p. 23.

ANOTHER remark, very worthy of our notice, ought not to be passed over in this place; that left the mutual grievances of Adam and Eve, the former having been seduced, and the latter degraded from her original equality, should have occasioned jealousies, contention, and even a rupture, between them, the wisdom and goodness of God are here most conspicuous, in making the gracious promise of a redeemer, related above, who should repair all their losses, to depend upon the strict preservation of the matrimonial union.

BUT the severest part, perhaps, of the woman's sentence, is still behind: *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception*, in the Hebrew idiom; signifying thy sorrow in thy conception; which includes all the time of pregnancy, when women generally nauseate all their food, have the most troublesome longings, and endure other things very grievous to them; especially when they are in danger of miscarriages, very frequently happening.

BEGINNING regularly with *the suppression of the menstrual discharges*, we see the lively colour of the lovely sex, changed into a greenish, pale, and wan complexion; when the vessels *peculiarly* appropriated to the nutritious fluid, are employed in a new office. Then what head-achs, vertigos, mists before the eyes, qualms, languors, and aguish fits, indicate that a man is begun. And as the load increases, so doth the loss of strength, till parturient pangs issue in delivery. Nor even when this is procured are women always out of danger, especially while the after-birth
stays

stays behind, occasioning fore anguish, and exposing the life to the greatest peril.

THESE sufferings may now seem no way strange to us, who every day see all, or some part of them endured: And yet on reflection they are truly astonishing. Brute creatures are observed to conceive, and bring forth their young, with much less difficulty, pain and hazard, than women, who are the only beings under heaven, so far as we know, that have any trouble at conception. This a nice investigator of nature affirms to be the case, except in the instance of a mare conceiving by an ass, and, in general, where there is any thing monstrous, injured, or distorted in the foetus.

IF it should be asked, how we can be certain, that other creatures have no sickness on the occasion, it may be confidently replied, that we can judge of the sickness and health of brute animals, by as sure marks, as of our own; though not always so clearly, in what particular part their distempers lie. And, to put the matter beyond all doubt, it is evident, that, whereas women are, all of them, disordered by conception, other creatures are in more perfect health, and have more strength, and a better habit of body, after it, than before.

BESIDES, *the woman's conceptions are greatly multiplied*, as she is remarkably subject to abortions, and false conceptions, above all other animals in the world; as are also *her sorrows*, by the mortality of her issue; frustrating, as it were, the ends of providence

dence and society; and by her pangs and dangers, just now mentioned, at the instant of production, contrary to what might be expected, from several circumstances in her form, which naturally promise more ease to her, than that of any brute to it, in this case, that we are acquainted with*. So singularly and emphatically true also is this other part of the woman's punishment.

NOR is the truth of what still remains to be examined less demonstrable: *Thy desire shall be to thy husband.* That is to say, not only she should be henceforth dependent on the will of her husband, as she had early indulged her own in a most criminal act, without his advice or consent; but likewise, after all the miseries, which she and her daughters, from generation to generation, should suffer, as a general consequence of the mysterious rite, *the appetite* for gratification should still subsist, and be the most predominant.

ADAM, being last in the transgression, has sentence last pronounced upon him. *Unto him God said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, more than unto me, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee: And thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: For out of it wast thou taken: Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* This sentence re-

* Dean Delany's Revel. Exam. page 74.

quires little explanation; the import of it is obvious; and the fulfillment clearly verified. Toil and drudgery was to be the consequence of departing from an easy and reasonable obedience; hard labour was to subdue, and keep within certain bounds, those appetites and passions which had now broken loose from the restraints imposed upon them; and, notwithstanding man's utmost industry, to cultivate and improve it, the earth was to be less desirable to him, when his guilt had reduced him to the necessity of leaving it: *For dust thou art, and into the very same state from which thou wast taken, shalt thou assuredly return.*

AND as it was no longer convenient that guilty man should remain in the abode of innocence and pleasure, *God drove him out* from it for ever; and even with the keenest irony; *Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.* Whether such a mode of speech, implies a plurality of persons in the divine nature, partaking of the same essence, we have examined in another place. And to prevent our surprise, when irony is attributed to the majesty of God, we may turn our attention to the various and repeated strains of it, introduced into the scriptures, after the manner of men.

WHERE the place of exile appointed for our first parents was, Moses hath not informed us; only by heavenly guardians being *placed at the east of the garden of Eden*, it is probable that it was toward that quarter of the earth, in relation to paradise. The vagueness of the expression, laying no foundation upon which opinions can be grounded with any certainty, both Jews and Mahometans, have presumptuously

tuously determined the place, and told ridiculous stories concerning its productions *. What the sacred recital testifies is sufficient for us to know, that they were banished from the garden of God; and, to prevent creatures, who were no longer to be immortal on the earth, from *putting forth their hands, and taking of the tree of life*, which was the symbol, and, as has been said, perhaps the principle of immortality, that he placed at the entry of paradise, nearest to them, *Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way*.

UPON the words, *so the Lord God drove out the man*, it hath been likewise observed, that ignominy and violence attended the expulsion, in the same manner as an husband repudiates his wife; and that God, who is said by many of the prophets, to be married to his people, put away Adam and Eve, for ever, from his special favor, as a man does a woman, whom he rejects, and furnishes with a bill of divorce †; or as a prince banishes a subject, rebelling against him, whom he sends into exile, out of his own country ‡.

In the explanation of the word *Cherubim*, much learning hath been employed. A respectable Jew § hath said, that the word, in general, signifies any form or figure of a creature; but that here, on account of the article ¶, it denotes *chosen Cherubims*. Others are for deriving the second letter || from the *Arabic*, and thereby would have the appearance of a boy sub-

* Selden de Synedr. Lib. i. Cap. 2.

† Vide Synop. Critic. Poli, in Loco.

‡ Bp. Patrick in Loco. § Aben Ezra.

¶ Heb. חַרְבִּים || Heb. בן Polus, in Loco.

stituted. But all these conjectures are foolish, and have no foundation in the analogy of grammar.—Of this only we can be certain, that *Cherubims* are heavenly messengers; supposed to be *destroying angels**; *excelling in strength*; different from the other hosts of the Lord, and the swift ministers of his that do his pleasure†; and that those, as well as these, appeared of old, as attendants on the divine majesty, in extraordinary dispensations, supporting the Almighty's throne: A scene gloriously described by Ezekiel, in the first chapter of his prophecies, where he presents to our imagination a great cloud, a fire infolding itself, and a brightness about it, out of which proceeded a colour like that of amber. Herein were four living creatures, always reckoned *Cherubims*, every one of whom had four faces, and four wings, and feet sparkling like the colour of burnished brass. The distinction of their faces, and the disposition of their members, are delineated with great accuracy. Over their heads was a firmament, and above that firmament a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone, and upon the likeness of the throne, was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And he had the brightness of fire round about him; as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the GLORY of the LORD, when I heard the voice of one that spake to me.

* The author of these Dissertations regrets the want of Arch-deacon Sharp's Discourse upon this word, in refutation of the *Hutchinsonian Scheme*, which he hath formerly perused with pleasure. But it is not to be found in *Dublin*.

† Psal. 103, 20, 21.

I

THE

THE passage into the garden of *Eden*, one, or more of those *Cherubic* watches, (the word being plural, has been variously interpreted) guarded with a *flaming sword which turned every way*. By this *flaming sword*, one of the fathers of the church, agreeably to the loose fancies of his age and country, understood the *Terrid zone*, his vicinity to which, perhaps, sometimes incommoded him*. A learned Rabbi†, giving a signification to the text different from what it offers at first view, hath believed this *flaming sword* to be no other thing than the angel mentioned in conjunction with it; and supported his opinion with that place in the *Psalms*, where it is said, that *God maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire*‡. That one of the *Seraphim*, or a flaming angel, in the form of a fiery flying *Seraph*, or serpent, whose body, moving in the air, resembled the vibrations of a sword, was appointed, with the *Cherubim*, to keep the entrance of the garden, has been the doctrine of a most judicious divine§. A sense, extremely forced, hath been put upon our Saviour's words, who, in the *tenth* of St. Mathew, says, *he came not to send peace upon the earth, but a sword*, and in the *e'venth* of St. Luke, instead of *sword*, uses *division*; from whence the conclusion is drawn, that by the *flaming sword*, in this place, we are to understand, an insurmountable barrier, or

* Tertullian apologet. Cap. 47.

† *Locus illa, Labet flammam gladii versatilis, vel vertentis se, intelligendus est juxta illud; ministros suos ignem lobet flammantem*—quia angeli instar prothei in varias formas se convertunt. Maim. Mor. Nevo. Pars 1. Cap. 49.

‡ Psalm 104, 4.

§ Bp. Patrick, in Loco.

an impervious fire, obstructing, or cutting off the way to Paradise*. There have been a few, who have amused themselves with the fancy that *Naphtha*, with which the province of *Babylon* abounded, and where Paradise is supposed to have been situated, was the flaming appearance, which deterred Adam and Eve from re-entering their late habitation. This *Naphtha*, we are told, in other respects resembles Bitumen, and is so inflammable that before it touches the flame, it will take fire at the very light of it, and often kindle the intermediate air. In the country about *Ecbatana*, Alexander saw streams of it so copious as to spread into large lakes, and fire bursting out of the cliffs of the earth; which is so heated and relaxed by this porous substance, that often the grains of barley leap up, as if the violent inflammation had given a pulsation to the ground†. But instead of turning over more volumes, which only multiply fancies about this matter, our enquiries may be more usefully closed, with a plain acknowledgment, that Revelation affords us no other information here, but that our first parents were driven out of Paradise as a punishment for their transgression, and totally deprived of all hopes, by visible and the most awful demonstrations of the divine displeasure, that ever they should return.

By this ejection and exclusion from the blooming and opulent inheritance their bountiful father had gi-

* Polus.

† Plutarch's Life of Alexander. The anecdote immediately follows his taking Susa.

Caverna ibi est, ex qua fons ingentem vim bituminis effundit, adeo ut satis constet Babylonicos muros ingentis operis hujus fontis bitumine interlitos esse. Quint. Curt. L. v. C. 1.

ven them, they lost the benefit of *the tree of life*, which, as has been repeatedly said, was either ordained, by its physical virtue, to invigorate and renew human nature, that man, by eating of it, might *live for ever*; an opinion very justly rejected by many divines*; or, as the *Rabbi*, frequently referred to, thinks, should, by the thickness of its trunk, and enormous strength, be allegorical to them; perhaps, he means, give them the assurance of their coevality with it. And this tree, proceeds he, our sages say, God never discovered to any man, nor ever will he discover it†.

To draw the line of truth through this work, the opinion of those in regard to the tree of life, who make it purely *sacramental* and symbolical of the immortality, which Adam had conferred on him, ought to be recommended. The venerable Bishop of *Hippo* says, that the other trees in the garden had nourishment in them for Adam's food, and the tree of life was

* Merito à Scoto, Thoma, et alijs hæc sententia rejicitur, quia potentia finita, non potuit habere efficaciam infinitam vitam in infinitum tempus extendendi: Adde quod cum fructus ejus non minus ac succus corruptioni obnoxius esset, absolute non potuisset ab interitu hominem vindicare, nisi alia causa intercessisset. F. Turret. Loc. Oâ. Quæst. v. p. 639.

† Dicunt sapientes nostri; non finis ramorum, sed Crassities Trabis vel Trunci ipsius, iter est quingentorum annorum, stantis in terra. Atque hæc metaphora vel allegoria quoque ab ipsis ad perfectiorem rei alicujus explicationem allata est.—Et arborem vitæ non revelavit Deus ulli homini, neque etiam unquam revelabit. Maim. Mor. Nev. P. ii. C. 30.

his sacrament †; or a pledge that he should enjoy them. And might be, moreover, an illustrious type of that eternal felicity, to which he should be translated in due time, and possess for ever in his maker's immediate presence; in the same manner as Christ, who purchased it back again for all of us, is called, in two passages of the Revelations, *the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God.*

HAVING thus given an explication of this most important event in the annals of mankind, some difficulties that lie against it come, now, to be considered. And *first*, some unbelievers, to whom the *history of the fall* would have been altogether as *incredible*, though perhaps not quite so *entertaining*, if even every thing had been *simple* and *clear* in it, seem to declare they can as easily believe, that a *serpent* tempted Eve, as that any *evil spirit* could ever be permitted to do it. This kind of unbelief having no right to an argument, where a resolution appears to reject the most reasonable principles; it may be sufficient here to refer those who entertain it, ever so obstinately, to the beginning and close of the dissertation immediately going before.

OTHERS, indeed, who are not unbelievers in general, in matters respecting religion, yet stagger at some of the circumstances of the fall above related, are requested to consider, that the *speculations* arising from that event, upon which the *Supralapsarians* and the *Sublapsarians* have built the most absurd and indigestible *systems*; and even the most *philosophical* di-

† St. August. de gen. ad lit. lib. 8. cap. 4.

times introduced the distinction crudely, between *natural* and *moral* evil into the world *, are of all others the most abstruse, and the farthest removed from the reach of our understandings †. This difficulty led men in the *earliest* time to form, in their imagination, two *independent* principles of *good* and *evil*; the one called *Oromasdes*, and the other *Arimanius*; a notion entirely destructive of the sovereignty of God, the maintenance of which is the principle end and design of the *Mosaic* history. If this history, it is true, had, gravely and authoritatively, introduced an *invisible evil being*, to confound the works of God, by the fall of his noblest creature here below, and to be the author of *iniquity*, great countenance might have been given to this error of two principles: Or, to colour it properly over, without any regard to the extent of his commission, Moses must have written the history of *the fallen angels* likewise, from which, perhaps, we might have derived no useful instruction: But nothing of this appearing in these holy pages, and the contrary being the prevailing principle through the whole of the *old scriptures*, the conclusion is evident, that, under the mixed government of the Almighty, so to speak, malice and wickedness, in a superior being might be *permitted*, though not *ordained*, much less supposing that being *co-ordinate* with God in power or existence, to effect all this mischief through the equality of the *poize* in the critical trial; for the greater aggravation of his guilt and sufferings, and of his *wicked associates*; while the frail victims, of his

• Dr. John Clarke, in his lectures, is the most intelligible

+ See Dissert. 6, near the end.

envy and wrath, were to be *ransomed* from all the *natural*, and never-ending consequences.

A *second* objection often urged is, why God punished the evil spirit, under the figure of the serpent? The answer offers itself to our minds at once: It was necessary, in the wisdom of God, to punish the author of evil immediately, and in the presence of Adam and Eve; otherwise they might have been led into the most dangerous and destructive error, that there was some principle of evil in the world, some powerful malignant spirit independent of God, capable of controlling his will, and destroying his creatures: and, therefore, such an exertion of the power of Jehovah over this apostate was necessary, in the very presence of those whom he had betrayed, as might convince them in the style of the prophet, that *he was God, and that there was none else;—that he was God, and there was none like him;—that he formed the light, and created darkness; made peace and created evil;—that the Lord, in short did these and all other things, consistent with his wisdom and goodness, and the rectitude of his moral government* *

For a corroboration of this doctrine, let it be farther considered, that a spirit cannot be punished to human eyes, otherwise than under some sensible appearance; and what other sensible appearance could have so much resemblance to the *Devil* and his crimes, as a *serpent*, an *insidious* and *artful* animal? And, besides, what could be a more proper humiliation of his pride, than to punish him under the *brutal* form,

Isaiah, x. Iv, 5, 6, 7.

in which he perpetrated the guilt? A supposition will illustrate how the case really appears to have been; that a prince surprised a rancorous subject, of the first quality, plotting rebellion against him, in the most obscure and disguised garb; and to the circumstances of the mortification, attending his condemnation and execution, all the infamy of that character he had taken upon him, is added. Apply only this, though more might be annexed, to the proudest spirit in heaven, and tell us how it could be relished by him, when sunk below the vilest condition of brutality*?

A PART of the sentence pronounced upon the woman, has, in the third place, been thought, by some, very doubtful, and the question seriously urged, if it be really imaginable, that the race of females would have suffered less pain, and been exposed to less danger, on the supposition that Eve had never transgressed, than at present. Now, in reply, we must either admit the infelicity of women, at the time of child-bearing, to be the effect of a just punishment, or of very hard treatment from their maker: There is no alternative. He who made other creatures perfect in their kind, could have formed the fairest of his works proportionably perfect. But the infinite goodness of the divine nature will not suffer us to suspect any partiality on this occasion. All this misery must, therefore, demonstrably be the effect of a curse pronounced on the original mother, and by her entailed upon all her daughters; and

* Let the Dean of Down's 5th dissertation be read through out, and a part of the 6th on this subject. And likewise Dean Sherlock's Discourses on Prophecy.

acknowledged

DISSERTATION VII. 121

acknowledged as such by all, who take a just view of the matter.

It has been objected, fourthly, that the threatening, annexed to the charge that Adam should *not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, was not executed. That he did die, and that every generation of his descendants, except the present, has died since, is allowed by all. But, say Infidels, consistently with the words of the sentence, he should have died immediately after the act of disobedience; whereas he *lived nine hundred and thirty years*.—Those who make such objections ought to have their understandings enlightened, and be informed, that it is no where said, nor to be understood, that Adam should die on that very day he eat the forbidden fruit. For the Hebrew words*, which, when literally translated, are, *dying, thou shalt die*, signify only the certainty of the event, not the time of it: They import that he should, that instant, lose the privilege with which he was invested of *living for ever*, and become *mortal*; that is, not liable to *death* only, against which there was to be no remedy, but to the *corruption of it* also; as all of us should likewise have been, after many sicknesses, pains and diseases, the direful fore-runners of dissolution, if the *second Adam* had not obtained for us a happy resurrection.—An entire deprivation of existence, a total extinction of being, after Adam's leaving this world, seems to be the extent of the

* Heb. *מוֹתָ* *מוֹתָ* *מוֹתָ*

divine

divine threatening; though others have conceived eternal pains included in it*.

How long the first scene of things might have continued, and man remained on the earth, if obedience had preserved him from death, has been likewise made a question, and difficulties insuperable are apprehended to arise out of the opinion that the human race, would have perpetually multiplied, without any diminution; and there are equal difficulties about the translation to any other state. This is the utmost force objectors can give to their scruples, on this part of the subject. To whom, it would be infinitely more easy to give a variety of answers, than to fix upon one that may be fully satisfactory to them. *Known unto God from the beginning are all his works—and his counsel concerning them shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure* †:—For they are done in judgment; from the time he made them, he disposes the parts thereof. But for us, his kingdom is vastly too universal and permanent for contemplation; and the plan upon which he has laid all the parts of it altogether inscrutable; and, for very wise reasons, communications of light may be denied us, which we would be very glad to have. A conjecture, however, about the removal of mankind from this, to another place of residence, after a certain period of probation, may be modestly offered. Though St. Paul says, *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*.

* *Comminatio mortis, quæ denunciatur transgressoribus, complectitur et temporariam et eternam mortem in inferis subeundam* F. Turret. Loc. Qæd. Quest. 6.

† *Isaiah, lxvi, 9. 10. Eccles. xvi, 26.*

kingdom

tion*, and Adam was plainly *corruptible*, by the meat and the drink that nourished him, and as many bodily necessities, such as sleep and rest, testified; and, therefore, could not enter upon a celestial life, without being changed from his animal state; yet the divine power, that fashioned him at first, could, with the same ease, transform his nature, and fit him for immortality in heaven, when the length and fidelity of his services had, in a certain degree, qualified his soul for it.

Now if this were true, the objection, which we have irresistible force upon our minds, whether we have it or not, is this: *conjecture destitute of all ground in revelation.* In the covenant made with Adam, indeed, no mention is made of a life in heaven conferred on him; but, notwithstanding the brevity of the relation, the doctrine may be collected, by the most legitimate consequence, from the commination opposed, and from the *sacramental seal* of the promise, *the tree of life*. The silence, or rather obscurity of Moses, who delivers many things, concerning this covenant, only under shadows, making but a few of them now and then easy, by a gentle ray of light let in upon them, does not hinder us to conclude even positively, that a point of such great moment, to support him in obedience, was actually revealed to the first man. The translation of *Enoch, the seventh from Adam*†, and of *Elijah, in later times, in a chariot of fire*, confirms the foregoing reasoning, in which we plainly see the mutability of matter, by the divine operation, not to insist on that of our blessed Saviour immediately in the presence of God, to be a priest forever, as divines

* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

† St. Jude, verse 14.

are not agreed, whether the celestial body was assumed at his resurrection or ascension.

AFTER all this, it has still been objected to the Mosaic account of the consequences of the fall, that there is great harshness and cruelty in the conduct ascribed to the Almighty, who is represented as *fierce* and *enraged*, driving out his own creatures in *anger*—and, in a kind of *fury*, cursing the very earth for their sakes. Now if this were true, the objection would have irresistible force upon our minds, whether we considered the all-perfect nature of the parent of all, or his own declaration, that *fury is not in him* †. But where does Moses make use of all these expressions, to set forth the vehemence and excess of the divine anger on this occasion? There is no other foundation for all this calumny, than the delusion of a vain and blasphemous imagination, except in the single expression of *cursing the earth*;—not a single word appears of *anger*, *rage*, *fury*, through the whole relation. On the contrary, we see the strongest signs of compassion and mercy to the guilty: *unto Adam and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them*: That is, of the skins of those beasts, which they were to offer in sacrifice to him, to be discoursed of hereafter, the Lord God gave direction that they should make themselves warmer cloathing, and fitter to defend them from the injuries of the weather, than the *fig-leaves they had sewed together*, upon the first sight of their *nakedness*.—In this he was not cruel to his poor creatures, nor regardless of their welfare; but, like an affectionate father, who feels the suffer-

† Isaiah, xxvii, 4.

ings he inflicts upon the most beloved children, for their disobedience, made instant provision for their comfort and happiness. — Even in *curſing the earth*, there was clemency, when thoſe guilty creatures had entailed death and miſery upon themſelves, and all their poſterity, ſtood in need of having their minds detached from it, by every method of diſcipline, and ſet on the things of another life.

ADAM himſelf grounded his hopes clearly on theſe, and the like intimations of his maker's goodneſs, after his claim to it was loſt, and he had none to expect. *He called his wife's name Eve, becauſe ſhe was the mother of all living.* Before, it was *Aſſe*, woman, as ſhe had been taken out of *Aiſh*, man; now it is changed into Eve, in belief that God would not inflict death on them ſoon, nor leave the world uninhabited after their death, but make her the mother of many generations; and particularly of the promiſed *ſeed*, by whom he might even hope to be raiſed from the dead again, and reſtored to immortal life. — If he ſaw this day, even aſar off, his heart could not but rejoice! Here then was another plentiful ſource of comfort to our firſt parents, and a freſh evidence of the divine bounty.

Or their expectations from this promiſed *ſeed*, unbelievers, beſides all the foregoing ſcruples, have ſuggeſted the ſtrongest doubt. What unreaſonable liberty of interpretation, ſay they, has been taken by Chriſtian Divines? Let them tell us, by what rules of language, *the ſeed of the woman*, ſo much inſiſted on by them, is made to denote *one particular perſon*; and by what art the myſtery of *Chriſt's* miraculous conception

conception can be discovered, in this common expression? Let them tell us, farther, how the bruising the serpent's head, can possibly signify the destroying the power of sin, and the redemption of mankind by a general saviour? The words of the sentence pronounced upon the deceiver are only these: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Whence they argue, that Adam, and his posterity, should now and then knock a serpent upon the head, and suffer the smart and danger of a bite on the heel, by that agile and revengeful animal.

It is true, Christian Divines apply this part of the sentence to our blessed Saviour, as a prophecy of him, who is, no doubt, called here *the seed of the woman* emphatically, and who came, *in the fullness of time*, to bruise the serpent's head, by *destroying the works of the devil*, and restoring to *the liberty of the sons of God*, those who were held under the bondage and captivity of sin. And it is no wonder that such questions are started by those who look no where else, for the ground of the christian application, and the unfolding this promise, than to this third chapter of *Genesis*. As the promise, or the prophecy stands *there*, nothing may appear to point out this particular meaning; or to confine the words to it. But searching the whole dispensations of providence and grace, we will find this application of the passage, by christian divines, fully justified; and that the various events, under those dispensations, which mere historians, without a belief in religion, will acknowledge to be well authenticated,

ticated, confirm, with the greatest strength, the use that has been made of it.

THE very state itself in which Adam was, at the time their sentence was pronounced, explains the words, by the fairest construction. He was in a state of sin, standing before God to receive condemnation for his disobedience. He had, when the first instructions were delivered to him, heard the penalty, *on the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*; the full execution of which he had reason to expect immediately, and without mitigation; and, at the end of the judgment, heard these awful words, the last that were to be spoken, and therefore irreversible, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. Now, to preserve him and his wife, as objects of mercy, from final despair, it was absolutely necessary to communicate *so much* hope to them, as might be a *rational foundation* for their future endeavours, to reconcile themselves to their maker, by a better obedience. And what could so powerfully inspire them with this hope, as the prospect of a deliverer, however dark and indeterminate that prospect might be, who should repair their losses, and restore them to their primitive rights? After informing Adam that his days should be short, and full of misery, any other comfort would have been inadequate to his case; and, consequently, the interpretation given, by christian divines, in a very qualified sense, must be acknowledged fully reasonable, nay altogether just, upon the most critical examination of the history itself.

BUT this class of objections to the consequences of the fall being removed, another opens upon us, of divines,

divines themselves, who ask, What has all this to do with the whole race of mankind, with the corruption of the moral world, and the ruin of all the glory and happiness of the rational creation? Here, as was said on another occasion, is *labour* and *work* indeed, where matters of the last moment in religion, are brought into question.

A CERTAIN writer represents the sentiments of divines, both popish and protestant, in this manner, and says they have been generally, and for a long tract of time, such as are here collected; namely, that the guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to, or charged upon, all his prosperity—that there is a total defect of that righteousness, wherein he is supposed to have been created; and that the corruption of human nature, whereby all mankind are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, is the source of all the wickedness committed in the world—further, by Adam's transgression all mankind were deprived of communion with God—and that all, as soon as ever they come into the world, are under his wrath and curse; by nature the children of wrath, bond-slaves to satan, justly liable to all the punishments in this world, and, in the world to come, an everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and the most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell for ever.

THIS, in the same writer's words, is, no doubt, an affair of the most dreadful importance, and requires to be examined with all possible care and impartiality. For an error in this point will affect the whole scheme
of

of christianity, and enervate the great design. Let us, therefore, examine the affair, with all possible care and impartiality; and remember that it is with Pelagians and Socinians we are arguing these points.

FIRST, it is made an objection that the guilt of Adam's first sin should be imputed to, or charged upon, all his posterity. But the objection being too general, and, in this form, having staggered some that would otherwise have admitted the doctrine, when explained, things ought to be fairly discriminated, and the state of the question given. It is plainly this; Adam being the root of all mankind, must not the punishment, in all its consequences, except personal remorse for having incurred them, equally affect them, as those consequences did himself? In his sentence, there were included diseases, sickness, pains, and dissolution; and could he transmit to his posterity, any other kind of nature, than that to which he was now reduced? In the sweat of his face he was to eat his bread, till he returned to the ground, and what right could his offspring claim to a better condition? As he had been taken from the dust, by the divine omnipotence, and when fashioned for immortality, had forfeited his life and existence, and was actually condemned to die; could any of his children, begotten during the suspension of the sentence, or of his more remote descendants, issuing from them, expect any other lot than that of mortality, under which the original progenitor had manifestly fallen?

THE reasoning is not less conclusive, when we view it in a legal, than in a natural light. Adam being clearly a fæderal head, or common representative,

K

his

his personal sin was very different from that which is now frequently committed; the guilt and punishment of which rests with a man's self. His extended to those who were to derive from him. Nor are we without examples in the policy of nations, which is fixed by God himself, upon the natural course of things, of one, of many suffering for the crimes of another.— There are few countries in the world, where high treason is not punished with the forfeiture of estates and titles, to the transgressor, and all his posterity.— And if this sentence is changed, as it sometimes is, into a milder form, in imitation of the divine goodness, have not those whose privileges are restored to them, under certain restrictions, the strongest reasons to be thankful?

THIS doctrine is not false, when applied to the great governor of the world. That he will not punish vice, in the most awful and exemplary manner, is a false notion, and has the most dangerous tendency; though all the Pelagians and Socinians, the Free-thinkers and Philosophers that ever lived, should join in defending it.

BUT, secondly, what has all this to do, say they, with a total defect of that righteousness in his posterity, wherein Adam is supposed to have been created? The nature and extent of that righteousness has already been examined and set forth, as they result from the evidence of scripture*. And if that evidence be admitted, in regard to the knowledge, righteousness and holiness, in which it evidently appears, and must, from the nature and government of

* See Dissertation ii.

God, and the first man, be concluded, Adam was made, or endued with; can we, consistently with the clearest testimonies, deny that all his children, ever since his transgression, have lost those original qualities, seeing ignorance, injustice and impiety have been the universal characteristics of mankind, except, where powerful remedies, under gracious dispensations, have been administered, and submissively applied. Even these, powerful in themselves as they have been, have too seldom been sufficient to draw the world out of the abyss of depravity and wickedness. Notwithstanding all that education and correction can do for us when we are young, and all the influence that religion, and the laws of our country, have over us, when we are grown up, those, of our fellow-creatures who make themselves tolerably acquainted with their duty, and keep themselves in the paths of it, are but few, in comparison of such as are deplorably defective in knowledge, and lead very disorderly and sinful lives; and even the best of men are so very often, and sometimes so extremely, wanting to themselves, in point of duty, interest and honour, that experience sufficiently proves the universal change of our nature from light to darkness, and from rectitude to corruption. The cause and effect here are so combined, that it is altogether impossible, in a reasonable imagination, to separate them. A deprivation of righteousness must be moral corruption, spiritual death, and the source of all the wickedness committed in the world.

THE third objection is, that by Adam's transgression all mankind were deprived of communion with God. This communion must imply a maintenance

of that relation in which God was pleased to place his rational offspring ; his favour, secured by obedience, would largely reward all the labours of it, by imparting unspeakable comfort to the human heart ; and experience of its past indulgence and liberality inspire the most delightful confidence in the same, for all times to come. But violate that relation, and immediately all this happiness is forfeited, and necessarily destroyed by the very consciousness of demerit. Besides, as *God loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity, holds the way of the wicked as an abomination, and is of purer eyes than to behold evil*, his grace and approving regards are withdrawn from the ungrateful and rebellious ; of which class, without new methods of amendment and restoration, all the sons of Adam would at this day have been ; bond-slaves to satan and their own lusts. And how the final consequence, so much objected to, could have been avoided, of wrath and displeasure, of an everlasting separation from the presence of God, and of the most grievous torments, to the utmost extent of our nature and capacity, without intermission for ever, let those who are of a contrary opinion, condescend to explain.

IN short, on these doctrines briefly sketched, the doctrines of the gospel ultimately depend. They are addressed indeed to particular sinners ; but manifestly suppose that *there is none righteous, no not one.*—Through Christ alone the tidings of life and favour are announced to mankind, who, by nature, have no other claim to them than Adam had after his transgression. As a token of his wretched condition, he was shut out from accession to the tree of life, which was closely guarded by a *flaming sword* in the hand of

of a *cherub*: And in allusion to this pledge and evidence of God's love, our Lord, in the book of the revelations, is designed by *the tree of life, which grows in the midst of the paradise of God, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.*

DISSERTA.

DISSERTATION VIII.

OF THE MURDER OF ABEL; AND CAIN'S
CURSE.

GENESIS IV.

THE first sin, with its dreadful universal effects, we have long had under our consideration; and here we have another, springing, undoubtedly, from the polluted fountain, of the blackest die, and introducing desolation, horror and infamy into the common family of mankind. The tragical act of one brother towards another, very soon gave fatal evidence of the fallen state of man. On the birth of the first son, *the soul of Eve*, to borrow Mary's words, *magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God*; when she could not possibly know that the transports of joy, usual on such occasions, would, in a few years, be turned into sorrow and mourning. *I have gotten a man from the Lord*, says she; for this is the signification of the name Cain, which was given him. Some divines, on the ambiguity of the Hebrew*, have translated the words, *I have gotten a man which is the Lord*; and

* Heb. *אֶתְּ לַדְּבָרִים*

imagined

imagined that Eve believed this new-born infant to be the Messiah. But, perhaps, this may be only a fond imagination of some good Christians, whose views of the general scheme of Redemption must have been much larger, than those the original mother of mankind had, who only saw the beginning of that scheme.

For the name of the second son, which was Abel, divers reasons have been given, according as the word has been deduced from different roots. It has been thought to import mourning, and that Abel was so called, either by a particular appointment of providence, prefiguring to his parents, their grief on his death; or that he was only called by this name, after the event had explained the meaning of it. Others, again, derive it from a word that signifies *vanity*, and think that Eve either confessed the vain hopes she had entertained at Cain's birth, and that she could not reasonably form the same upon that of a second son; or that he was called *vanity*, because all that was in the world, into which he was entering, was *vanity*, and *vanity of vanities*.

WHEN those minute criticisms, of little moment, are dismissed, from the plain history it obviously appears, that the two brothers ought to have been united in the closest bands of friendship and love. Every field, with its vegetable productions, and living stock, nay, the whole earth, and all its riches belonged to them, as joint-heirs and lords paramount. None of those vexatious claims could possibly subsist, which, in after ages, have so much disturbed society, and been the occasion of bloody wars and fightings, between

tween sovereign and subject, and children of the same family, about property and dominion. And yet Cain murdered Abel, for the following reason; that *the Lord had respect unto Abel, and his offering: But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect.*

HERE it may be enquired, whether their own consciences, dictating guilt to them, directed them to offer sacrifices as a proper method of appeasing the divine anger; or were they prescribed by revelation, not transmitted to us? Was it natural reason which declared the duty indispensable of offering a part of their wealth to him, of whom they held the whole? Were those sacrifices to be offered in a place of their own chusing, or of Adam's, or rather God's, where sensible marks of his presence were to be seen? Were those offerings always to be made by the ministry of Adam, or was every father of a family, the head of his own house, to make them? These points it may be equally difficult to determine, to the satisfaction of those who insist upon demonstration, or would be contented with probability. In another place, we shall enter on a larger discussion of them. The only thing, with certainty, affirmed here is, that Cain, being an husband-man, *brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord;* and Abel, who was a shepherd, *brought also of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof.*—The notion of milk, instead of the beasts themselves, is totally to be rejected.

How deceitful is the judgment formed on outward appearances! Who would have imagined, that between two of the first inhabitants of the new world, sons of the same family, acknowledging the
same

same true object of divine worship, and seemingly animated with the same desire of doing him homage, there should have been made so great a difference by their maker ? *The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering ; but unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart* * ; and in its dispositions, under every dispensation of religion, we are to seek for the rules of acceptance and disapprobation.—Of these the great searcher of hearts can alone be the proper judge.

IF we read the whole relation given by Moses, we will plainly see that Abel *did well*, that is, acted righteously in offering his sacrifice, and that Cain *did not well*, that is, unrighteously, in offering his sacrifice ; and, as a consequence, *sin lay at his door*. The apostle to the Hebrews points out the particular defect, when he says, *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness, that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts* †. By some eminent divines the interpretation of these words, of the greatest importance in the œconomy of religion, is, that though *animal* sacrifices had been appointed upon the fall, as an atonement for sin, yet Cain, for want of due conviction of guilt, and of reverence for the supreme command, presented only *the fruits of the earth* ; which were no more than *eucharistical*, or a tithe, so to speak, for the divine blessing on the ground ; and neither an acknowledgment of his corruption, nor of the necessity of appeasing God for it ; and much less any way expressive, or typical, of that *seed of the woman*, which was to come into the world, to

* 1 Sam. xvi, 7.

† Heb. xi. 4.

suffer death, and shed his blood for the remission of sins: and therefore could not be accepted, because it was not performed in contemplation of the great propitiation.—But this matter, when the subject of sacrifices comes expressly under our consideration, shall be more particularly examined.

THE holy scripture is more express, in regard to the *respect* that was paid to Abel's sacrifice, than the reasons which occasioned it. *Respect*, in the sacred language, often signifies to give approbation, both in the new, and the old testament, as every one will remember, without a reference to the places. But the external sign which the Almighty gave of his approbation of the sacrifice of the younger brother, is, in a great measure, unknown to us; though we shall likewise, enquire what the divine *appearances* and tokens were, in the sequel. If we may judge here, from the procedure of God in following ages, what this *testimony* was, *fire*, probably, descended from above, and consumed Abel's offerings, as a mark of the preference given to his sacrifices. Thus an old commentator * hath translated the passage, that *God consumed Abel's offerings by fire*; and heathens pretended that their Gods often signified their pleasure at fæderal rites, much after the same manner †.

* Theodor.

† ————— Sequitur sic deinde Latinus,
Suspiciens cælum, tenditque ad sidera dextram:
Hæc eadem, Ænea, terram, mare, sidera, juro,
Latonæque genus duplex, janumque bifrontem,
Vimque deum infernam, et diri sacraria ditis.
Audiat hæc genitor, qui fœdera fulmine sancit.

Æneid, Lib. 12. ver. 196.

It is no uncommon thing, as the discerning see, and the quick and sensitive part of mankind feel, that the innocence and goodness of the purest and most benevolent men, shall be the only reason for drawing upon them the hatred and resentment of a villain; and the virtues and excellencies of our neighbours, be considered as the condemnation of our vices and defects. The application to Cain fills us with conviction, that this reflection was very early just: He bore, impatiently, the distinction between him and his brother. Perhaps he imagined that Abel would also invade his birth right, which might then, as it afterwards did, give a certain dominion over the rest of the family; of the greater importance to Cain that no other division of power was ye made. This suspicion God repressed, and condescended to assure him, that his prerogative should be preserved; that to become as acceptable to him as his brother was, nothing was wanting but his *faith* and *righteousness*; and that there could be no political cause of bearing hatred to Abel, who should always be inferior to him, as he was the first-born.

BUT for this very reason that the Almighty was Abel's advocate, Cain's wrath was kindled the more against him. The defence made by the Being who was supreme over all, redoubled that jealousy, which it ought to have destroyed. Seeking, accordingly, an opportunity of betraying a man, whom he hated, because he was better than himself, and acknowledged to be so, Cain, it is not unlikely, proposed to go to the *fields*. The innocent man, unsuspecting of perfidious designs, followed the murderer, who created a quarrel, as a pretext to kill him. Of the nature of the

the dispute no notice is taken in the history; where it is only said that *Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him*. Some of the Jews thought Abel not only a *saint*, but a *martyr* also; and that he was killed by his brother for no other reason, but maintaining some orthodox point of religion*. A conjecture which, though it hath nothing in it opposite to the analogy of faith, hath yet no foundation in the words themselves, nor in the circumstances of the story.

By way of reproach, and to give Cain an opportunity of confessing this murder, that he might obtain pardon for it, *the Lord said unto him, Where is Abel thy brother?* But instead of recommending himself to the mercy of his judge, he scornfully rejected it, by another question; *am I my brother's keeper?*

THE divine justice never borrows such formidable arms as from an abuse of goodness. God, accordingly, replied to Cain, *What hast thou done?* *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground;* and to that voice I grant the vengeance which it solicits; that very earth, which hath received his blood, shall execute it. The soil shall refuse germination to the seed which thou shalt deposite in it, and to answer thy expectations in cultivating it. Thou shalt also seek a place of refuge in barren and uninhabited lands, far from the habitation which I had assigned to thy family, in the same manner as thy father was driven from Eden for his transgression; and in what country soever thou shalt settle, it shall prove a place of exile, where thou shalt spend a life as wretched as it has been criminal.—An early instance of God's severity in the pu-

* Targum of Jonathan, in Loco.

nishment of enormous wickedness; given literally in these awful words, *And now art thou cursed from the earth**; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. *A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.*

A FEW verses after, where the execution of this sentence is related, it is said, that *Cain went out from the presence of the Lord*. This expression, by many interpreters, is supposed to signify the Schechinah, or glorious appearance of God, by which the divine presence was made known to pious worshippers. After the establishment of the Mosaic dispensation, it is evident, that those who went up to the tabernacle in Shiloh, and to the temple at Jerusalem, for religious services, were said to appear before God, because there the shining light resided. That, in the very same manner, such a visible token of the presence of the Almighty appeared to the church, in their solemn assemblies, in its primitive state, spake and conversed with men, and approved and disapproved of their actions, is likewise certain; from the frequency and familiarity of the divine appearances to Adam, and the conferences we have seen held with Cain; neither of whom seem in the least alarmed at them; which plainly shews, that such appearances were no extraordinary things. And in the Book of Job, when the sons, or children, of God came together to present themselves before the Lord, the Lord is represented as discoursing with satan, about the character and circumstances of that holy man†. This scene, though an allegory, is clearly grounded on an allusion to the divine manifestations, so common in ancient times.

* Heb. חארמה † Job. i. 8.

EVERY one of Adam's family, so long as their number permitted them to assemble for sacrifice, in one place, would, as the sabbath returned, have this glorious vision before their face. It is not improbable, but that it was on the sabbath, when Abel's place was empty in the assembly, that the Lord said to him, *where is Abel thy brother?* And let us conceive, if we can, his dread and fear, when charged, by a divine witness, before a worshipping assembly, with the most flagitious crime, and exposed to the resentment of his almighty maker, whose prerogative of life and death he had sacrilegiously usurped! All would wait in silence, and foreboding expectation, when the sentence, mercifully mitigated, came forth.

FROM this shining light, which denoted the divine presence, it has been imagined, that the first inhabitants of the world were led to pay the honour of adoration to the sun; that orb, of all the other phœnomena of nature, having the strongest resemblance of that glory which then appeared; and to place fire, in later times, among the objects of idolatry. But while we relate these things, it is rather to give the thoughts of some commentators, than the true history of the first ages of mankind.

A REFLECTION a great deal more important is, that the same principle of baseness which prompts some men to wickedness, when they expect to escape, plunges them into despair the moment punishment is denounced. Cain testified his fear of sinking under the weight of the sufferings which awaited him, and that they would certainly prove greater than his strength to support them. He imagined that his misfortunes would exceed the words of his sentence, and that exile

ile was the least of the evils which he had to apprehend; in short, *that whoever found him would slay him*, as a strolling brute, dangerous to the human species; and against their hatred and resentment he had no security from the providential care and inspection, now withdrawn, like his presence. But God, who remembered compassion, in the midst of his anger, removed this terror, in a great measure, from his mind. *He set a mark upon him*, which should distinguish him from all others, and thereby obviate every pretext for killing him out of mistake; and declared besides, *whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold*. The lives of the very wickedest are often protected and prolonged, for wise and holy ends; and Cain was to live to a great age, either that he might have time to repent, or, being impenitent, remain a monument of divine justice.

INTERPRETERS have contended, with great warmth, about the nature of the mark which God set upon Cain. The passion for conjecture must be very powerful, when, with some Rabbins*, a dog is supposed to have always gone before Cain, and intimated to every one that this is the man whom it is dangerous to approach. Those, to whose authority the learned pay great respect, have been of opinion, that God ordered him to wear a particular garb, to make him remarkable from the rest of men, who were cloathed with skins, in order to prevent his being killed in place of a wild beast of the field†. A very diligent compiler hath said, that the ridiculous conjectures

* Vide Cornel. a Lapide, Tom. i. Gen. 4.

† M. Le Clerc, Gen. 4.

upon this point, have been almost without number. Some imagine that God impressed a letter on his forehead. And others have been so curious in their enquiries, as to pretend to tell what the letter was. A letter of the word Abel, say some; the tetragrammaton, or four letters of Jehovah, say others; or a letter expressing his repentance, say a third sort of writers. There have been other writers, who rather think his face and forehead were leprous; others that his mark was a wild aspect and terrible rolling eyes; others say, he was subject to a terrible trembling, so as to be scarce able to get his food to his mouth; a notion taken from the words used by the Septuagint for *fugitive and vagabond**. And there are some writers that have improved this conceit, by adding that wherever he went the earth shook and trembled round about him. But there is another notion of Cain's mark, as good as any of the rest, namely, that he had an horn fixed on his forehead, to warn all men to avoid him†. Among all these marks which have been enumerated, who shall determine *that* which was really set upon him. And where the field of fancy is so wide, and the event capable of being diversified by a thousand circumstances, to suggest one, accompanied with probability, is altogether sufficient. The Hebrew word ‡ strictly signifies a sign or token. It is used in the ninth chapter, when the bow was set in the cloud, as a sign or token that the earth should be no more destroyed by water. So that there is no better reason for saying there was any mark set on Cain, than that Noah had the bow delineated on his body. God gave Cain a sign or token,

* Septuagint *εἰς τὴν καὶ τῆς*

† Shuckford's Con. Vol. i. p. 8.

‡ Heb. *מוֹטָה*

to assure him that none should kill him; and the guesses about his mark testify how egregiously writers will trifle. They cannot avail themselves, by having recourse to the Septuagint itself *, where the word used by the interpreters, signifies the same thing as in the original text.

THE goodness of God, in itself infinite, and, in the exercise of it, to his creatures, vastly beyond the limits of ours to one another, was yet regulated by Cain's repentance, in the sentence that was passed upon him. He had, in a very little time, a full conviction of his folly and wickedness. He repeats over God's sentence against himself, as acknowledging the justice of it, and condemned himself so much as to imagine *his sin was too great to be forgiven*. For the translation we have, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*, rests on the ambiguity of the words in the Hebrew †; which may be rendered either positively, *My iniquity is too great to be forgiven*, or, as the Rabbinical expositors take it, by way of interrogation, *Is my iniquity too great to be forgiven* ‡? Can I find no mercy? No alleviation of the punishment I have brought upon myself?—The very language of a self-convicted and condemned wretch, who knows not the extent of the judgment incurred, for the mischief he has done.

AFTER these observations on the text, we have still to deplore, on this occasion, that the enemies of religion have taken every audacious and subtle method to undermine it. Because a great number of

* Sept. *ἡ ἁμαρτία αὐτοῦ*

† Vide Pag. in loco.

‡ Heb. *נורא כובי מַעֲשֵׂא*

inhabitants appear to have been on the earth, at the time Cain killed his brother, and there are traces of various arts in this first age of the world, some of that sort have boldly maintained, that the earth was inhabited before Adam himself. Because it is said by Cain, *every one that findeth me shall slay me*; and that he *went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden*, the argument has been thought conclusive, that there were pre-adamites*. To make it still stronger, they alledge, that even Moses makes mention of two distinct creations, one of mankind in general, and the other of Adam and Eve; and, in the progress of his history, gives strong intimations that there were several more men in the world when they were created; else it is not easy to conceive how all the circumstances, related above, could possibly happen: and would from hence infer, that Moses intended only to give an account of the origin of the Jews, and not of the primitive parents of the whole human race.

BUT these deistical, or rather altogether infidel objections, are easily answered; for the passage, wherein the creation of man is mentioned the second time, is plainly no more, as has been said already, than a recapitulation of what had been said before of the creation of the world in general, with a more particular detail of our first parents. And as to the numbers of mankind, about the time Abel was murdered, and of whom Cain was so much afraid, it is by no means improbable, that these should be all descended from Adam and Eve, whose posterity might well have multiplied to many thousands, by a fair calcu-

* Saurin, Discours. v.

lation, considering the original fecundity, and that none are supposed to have died since the respective births. For, in one hundred and thirty years, when Seth was born in the place of Abel, the number supposed might clearly have been produced.

THE most plausible objection to the Mosaic account, on the pretence of *pre-adamites*, remains indeed to be considered; and is this,—that if Adam and Eve be allowed to be the progenitors of all mankind, there can be no tolerable cause assigned of the difference of the colour between the *whites* and the *blacks*; while two sources, if admitted, would resolve the whole difficulty.

To this it may be answered, that the variety of complexions in the world, may be easily accounted for another way. We know how the hair and colour of men's bodies differ according to the climate they inhabit, and their greater or lesser distance from the sun; though they are all confessedly from the same stock, and of the same descent. And besides many of the causes which we evidently see producing this difference, there may be a great many more, with which we are unacquainted, perfectly natural, as well as appointed peculiarly by the wisdom of God. Hence we may conclude, that the first colony, which settled in a very hot country, received a great change in their complexion, proportionable to the heat of the climate, and became very tawny, gradually inclining to blackness, as the sun was more intense upon them, till in a generation or two, that high degree of tawnness might become natural, and at length the pride of the natives. And this tint, once given, would be

communicated to children, who, on every birth, would approach nearer to an absolute blackness; and as their tender bodies came to be exposed naked (as the manner of such countries is) to the violent heat of the sun, their skin must necessarily have been scorched to an extraordinary degree, and, perhaps, its very texture altered, and by that means contract a blackness far superior to that of their parents. By such a progress, it is not improbable, that people of the fairest complexion, when removed into a very hot climate, may, in a few centuries, become perfect negroes*.

AFTER all, wherein does the difference really consist? The most industrious and penetrating anatomists tell us, in nothing more than in the lymph deposited in the fatty membrane, or reticular work that lies under the skin. The colour of the blood, the muscles, the thoracic, the abdominal viscera, and the bones, are found to be the same in blacks, as in the whitest men. So that the celebrated judge †, who has strained hard, to induce the readers of his book to have faith in providence, as he expresses himself, may, perhaps, on reflection see, that there are not so many races of men upon the earth, as he once thought to be necessary to fit them for the different climates. He may remember that there have been wonderful emigrations to the most distant parts of the globe, from north to south, as well as from the east to the west, and that the settlers have not only lived, but soon become so adapted to their circumstances, as to be in all respects like the natives, if they followed their manners.

* Universal History, p. 99.

† Lord Kaim's History of Man, p. 10.

To resume the thread of the history ; we are certain that in about one hundred and forty years after the creation, the human race was greatly multiplied. For we are told that Cain *builded a city in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden*, about ten years after the murder of Abel ; that his own family, by this time considerably increased, and others who ventured to join a man and his house, who were so infamous, might live together in society, preferable to wandering up and down, as formerly ; and be more secure, as some think Adam's family was still seeking an opportunity to revenge an unnatural crime, which they could not possibly forget. This city he called *Enoch*, *after the name of his son* ; in the same manner as Nimrod called his city *Nineveh*, in honour of his son Ninus ; proofs sufficient of the antiquity of this custom. Several writers * have mentioned the *Enochii* in old times, who have been imagined to be the descendants of this son of Cain †. But this is extremely conjectural, as those *Enochii* inhabited some countries on the borders of *India* long after the flood, when all the tribes of the earth were deducible from Noah and his sons. And in the Mosaic history, it is very remarkable, the line of Cain's genealogy ends in this chapter, with the children of Lamech, as if it was unworthy of farther notice ; while that of Seth begins, and is traced down to the days of the great legislator.

It cannot be unobserved, that no woman has been hitherto mentioned in the world except Eve, nor any that Cain had, or could have taken for a wife. This point has been attended with some difficulties, and variously managed according to men's fancies. A

* Pliny, Mela, Lucan. † Sir Walter Raleigh.

wife,

wife, however, he most certainly had, though we are not informed whether he took her before the murder of his brother, or after. It is more probable, if we may supply the defect of the history, that it was previous to the fatal event, as most women, especially a sister, would naturally abhor an impious murderer. That his wife was his sister, we have no room to doubt, there being no other in the world, but his own family. But, according to the tradition, Eve, at her two first births, had twins, a son and a daughter, and Cain married Abel's sister, and Abel Cain's; which was absolutely necessary, and, for this reason, lawful: But, when that necessity ceased, the practice was prohibited by God, and hath ever since been held in abhorrence by men*.

FROM this example of distress and misery, introduced into a family, by the wickedness of some of its members, and many other warnings and admonitions of holy scripture, let every one learn their duty, and avoid those calamities which transgression brings upon themselves and others.

* Selden, Lib. v.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION IX.

OF THE INSTITUTION OF SACRIFICES.

GENESIS IV.

IN the Dissertation going before, we viewed Cain and Abel performing an act of religious devotion, by way of oblation or sacrifice to the Almighty; and suggested some of the reasons, why Abel's might be accepted, and Cain's condemned. And now a question, of great consequence to be resolved, comes, in this place, to be considered; namely, whether this kind of worship was of divine or human institution. If it was divine, sacrificing abounds with instruction; if humane, it is arbitrary, and of disputable authority. Some object, that we read of no command from God, in this early account of the world, for offering sacrifices; and therefore, conclude that men offered them of their own accord, from a grateful inclination to return to God some of his own blessings, and to acknowledge him to be the absolute proprietor of all their enjoyments; without any positive directions about them,

THIS

THIS objection, however, seems to have no force, and the conclusion to be false, when we rationally reflect; that, in the infancy of time, men wanted instruction more than at any time since; and consequently, were directed in every thing relating to religion, agreeable to the principles of God's justice and goodness, and to his proceedings in every age, under the respective dispensations. Besides, an apostle says, in a passage quoted before, that *Abel offered his sacrifice in faith*. In faith of what? certainly of God's acceptance, in the first instance. But how could he do this, if his faith had no other ground than his own fancy? For mere opinion never was, nor can possibly be, the solid foundation of faith. And it is, at the same time, said by Moses himself, that *God had respect to*, or, in other words, shewed his approbation of *Abel, and his offering*; in the language of the apostle, *he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts*, that they were proper, and offered in the prescribed manner. While, on the other hand, Cain's were not pleasing to God, because they were presented contrary to the rule; which plainly supposes a previous institution, of which he was, or might have been well informed. For if no such rule had been given, it is impossible that any censure could have been passed upon him, for not having observed it.

THIS reasoning is not, in the least, affected by what was before said of the disposition, which is principally regarded by God, in every service that is performed; seeing the externals, as well as the intention with which it is done, must be right. Nor is it to be urged, that the institution of sacrifices, in so concise

cise a history, is not mentioned, when other things, of considerable moment, are also omitted : Such as religious assemblies, Noah's preaching, and the exact increase and number of Adam's family. Things which were well known, or generally believed, when Moses wrote, required no particular description, but might be taken for granted.

THAT men, so early, had no communication with the Almighty, nor revelations from him, is far from being true, on the clearest evidence; God, in some visible form, having actually appeared, and made his will frequently known to Adam, and to all the succeeding patriarchs, whose names are recorded in this book, for upwards of two thousand years. When, therefore, Adam, and all the other patriarchs, had the fullest opportunity of knowing from God himself, what kind of worship was most acceptable to him, there was no necessity, nor room left for human inventions; nor is it to be supposed that Cain was excluded from a privilege which all the rest enjoyed; especially while he remained in a state of innocence. In fact, we find that God condescended to converse with him also, and to give him instructions for his conduct.

WE have, moreover, another source of auxiliary testimonies from scripture itself, that the institution of sacrifices was divine. Those beasts, with the skins of which our first parents were clothed immediately after the fall, were certainly slain, as sacrifices, by divine appointment. For till the flood, no such thing appears, as eating flesh of any kind, for food. And this rite of slaying beasts, seems highly suitable to the circum-

circumstances, into which mankind were brought, by transgression. Eating the tree of life became a state of innocence, and assured immortality to a faithful continuance in duty. But the killing a living animal was more correspondent to a guilty condition, as it expressed the deadly nature of sin, and the demands of a broken law.

A FARTHER argument, upon which an inference may be fairly founded that sacrifices were of divine institution, is, that the death of an innocent creature cannot be, in itself, an action acceptable to God; and, consequently, nothing could make it so, but some special propriety in the institution; we may rather say some necessity in the divine wisdom, for the instruction of mankind. It is even evident, that Moses, merely as an Historian, would never have given such an absurd relation, if the fact had not been fully ascertained, and rested upon the best authority.

THE proof here pursued results, indisputably, from the account connected with Abel's sacrifice, that he *offered it to God by faith*, which is declared to be the very thing that rendered it more *excellent* than Cain's; in the same manner as Noah built the ark by the express command of God; Abraham left his country and kindred, and Sarah believed that she should have a son in her old age; and for that faith, and firm trust and confidence in the Almighty, had the fulfilment of the promises made to them, in their several circumstances. For what other faith could possibly constitute the excellence of Abel's offering, than that it was acceptable to God, and an act of obedience

ence to his will? though, otherwise, an act most unlikely to be pleasing to him, or *righteous* in itself, because it was the destruction of an innocent creature. Nothing, indeed, but such a faith, as prompted Abel to that obedience, could ever make the blood of any being, *which is its life**, praise-worthy in any man, since the foundation of the world.

If this account given by Moses, of sacrifices and the manner of accepting them, be thought too short, it may be remembered, that the Jews, to whom he wrote, needed no more information; a clear and uninterrupted tradition from their ancestors, who lived long before Moses, having made them perfectly familiar to them: For it would be ridiculous to imagine, that he communicated to that nation all the knowledge, which the divine providence, by the preservation of his writings, hath, with equal grace and wisdom, transmitted to our own times. They were, likewise, soon to know, by miraculous fire from the divine presence, which fell on the first oblation, after the solemn consecration of Aaron and his sons†, that their own sacrifices were of divine institution, and pleasing to God, by this manifestation of acceptance; and therefore could have no reason to doubt from the shortest relation, that they had been instituted, and accepted, in this manner, from the beginning. Besides, a short relation, there is reason to believe, was necessary, at least very prudent; as this rite, in all probability, was loaded with many additional circumstances, at its revival under Moses; that the Jews, in this point, might be guarded from the infec-

* Gen. ix. 4. Levit. iii. 17.

† Levit. ix, Chapter.

tion of the heathens; and it might not be proper to explain the matter more fully, to an untractable and rebellious people.

BUT without insisting farther on the original hints of revelation, or the uncontroverted history of the Jewish church, from the first formation of the priesthood, till its final dissolution; an argument, of the greatest force, may be deduced from the universal practice of sacrificing beasts, and other animals, in all ages and nations, prior to the present dispensation of religion on the earth. Concerning objects of the mind's immediate intuition, and of sense, there can be no dispute: But in points of speculation, an uniform agreement seems to proceed from the voice of nature, or God himself speaking intelligibly to every nation by his works, or his words*.

Now that sacrifices obtained universally, for two thousand years at least, if not four, over all the regions of the known world, none can deny who has the least knowledge of antiquity †. And, that the practice did not take its rise, or prevail, from any dictate of reason, it is to be presumed, every one will readily own, who consults his natural understanding, and observes the aversion most men have to gratify their appetites, by wantonly shedding the blood of an harmless being of any sort whatever. For there could be no other temptation, in those ages, when the blood was actually spilt on the ground, and the body burnt on an altar, by all the religious part of men, we have the strongest reasons to believe, for

* Grot. de Verit. Ch. Relig. Abernethy, Serm. 1.

† Homer. Hesiod. Thucydides. Horace. Virgil.

the first sixteen hundred years after the creation. And though, under some distant succeeding periods, parts of the offerings were dedicated to the priests who served at the altar; yet priest-craft cannot be charged with beginning the practice of sacrifices; seeing the duty of sacrificing belonged, for some centuries, to the father of the family, who was more affected than any other, by the addition of an unnecessary expence. And when fathers became princes, by the increase of their dependants, royalty and the priesthood were united in one person, and sacrifices were provided at the sacrificer's own cost.

WHAT then can the ingenuity, or infidelity, of men possibly suggest, in order to invalidate or refute those accumulated arguments, that the institution of sacrifices, which we are here considering, is divine? The evidences adduced, to prove this, unprejudiced reason must judge to be clearly conclusive. *This was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob;* and to our first parents was an appointment of infinite wisdom, for their humiliation and comfort; and for the peace, prosperity, and confidence of the succeeding generations.

ADAM, condemned to death, was daily to be reminded of it. And what a striking emblem of mortality, must the carcases of those animals exhibit, which, a very little time before, could exercise their members and organs, in a wonderful manner, and were so beautiful and lively? When, in Holocausts, they were consumed to ashes, and reduced to a handful of dust, the first pair could not avoid the indulgence of meditations on their own sad condition, on
account

account of sin, and the fullest assurance, that they themselves must, in process of time, no great matter when, follow the same humiliating steps to destruction.

AND, at the same time, that their hearts were to be pierced, by sacrifices, with the detestation of guilt, and the dread of misery; those very sacrifices were the seals of a covenant of mercy, into which God had entered with our first parents, immediately after their fall. From hence, comfort would necessarily arise, when they saw, that though death was the wages of sin, yet God, in great compassion, would accept of the life of another in the room of the offender's.

THAT sacrifices were really intended as a token of mercy, who can doubt, when the divine solicitude for an hardened murderer, for so vile a wretch as Cain, is ever so little considered. Would God fail to intimate to Adam, the exercise of that attribute, at a time when it was more wanted, than ever it was since the world began? Would he take care of the health of Adam and Eve, after the grossest instance of disobedience, and make no provision for the peace of their minds? Nor lay any foundation for the hopes of the whole race of mankind, which was to spring from them?

ON this very presumption, that sacrifices were instituted by the Almighty at the beginning, and, therefore, acceptable to him, as a method of propitiation for sin; all nations, for a long series of time, rested their expectations of pardon and forgiveness. The chosen people had recourse to this method, under all
their

their calamities, to atone for guilt, and avert deserved judgments, as evidently appears through the whole volume of their history. And along with this act of devotion, they were taught, not only that God was propitious and indulgent, but also the reformation and improvement of their own nature and actions. The divine majesty, on his own account, derived from this mode of worship, no other advantage than a testimony of penitence and duty, on the part of his offending and dependant creatures.

He who is the creator, upholder, disposer, and everlasting proprietor of all things in the universe, neither needs, designs, nor gains any thing to himself, from ought within the whole compass of it. His laws, therefore, are not like those of earthly superiors, calculated for the common benefit of lord and servant, but framed and delivered for the sole advantage of the latter. *For if thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man*.* Whatever, accordingly, he hath appointed, by any revelation of his will, to be offered or done in his service, was and is merely for the emolument of the agent and giver. For it is not to be imagined, that any oblation, worship, or praise, contributes in any other sense to the glory of God, than as it includes the perception of his goodness, and serves to render it the more diffusive and effectual.

* Job, xxxv. 6, 7, 8.

WHEN,

WHEN, therefore, such appointments, are, by immorality or false opinions, perverted from their end, become misunderstood, or insufficient to quicken and fix men in their obedience to the everlasting laws of piety and justice; then he who made those appointments, with the greatest solemnity declares them, not only vain, but abominable, and an aggravation of other transgressions, instead of an atonement for them. This, by the mouth of many prophets, particularly Amos and Isaiah*, God distinctly and copiously pronounces: *I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice run down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream.*—To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? saith the Lord: *I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations: Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth. They are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood: Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before*

* Amos v. 21, Isaiah i. 10, &c.

mine eyes : Cease to do evil, learn to do well : Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

ACCORDINGLY, when the Jews had prostituted this ordinance to the purposes of wickedness, God, who had anciently appointed it, provided for its suppression. *Without repentance*, on the great day of atonement, when the guilt of the whole nation had the promise of oblivion, there could be no efficacious *remission* * granted to individuals. For their general guilt and impenitence, the daily sacrifice finally ceased at the destruction of the temple by Titus ; and, notwithstanding the most vigorous attempts, hath never since been restored. There are the strongest reasons in the world to believe, that the rite is for ever abolished †.

THE Gentiles likewise had, so to speak, lost the Almighty, and all sense of duty and devout obligation, amidst those rivers of blood which they incessantly shed at the altars of Idols, and the shrines of dead men. Cruelty, at length, aided superstition ; captives taken in war were slain, for the honour of departed heroes, and imaginary deities : And, in seasons of danger and distress, the most innocent and lovely of our own species were offered up. This horrid abuse, of a design originally beneficial, called for redress : A divine interposition was necessary to enlighten and mollify the world. Accordingly, whatever barbari-

* Heb. ימי החטאת

† The daily sacrifice, called by the Jews חטאת consisted of two lambs, the one of which was offered in the morning towards sun-rising, after the burning the sacred incense, and the other in the evening.

ties may be practised in resentment, or by the custom of savage nations, the civilization of the human race, advancing for some ages past by a happy progression, has abolished through the earth, so far as accounts have been sufficiently authenticated, the immolation of our fellow-creatures, to any god or dæmon, in the heavens, or the deep. Animal sacrifices also have been discontinued; and new modes of worship adopted, under the influence of a general dispensation, in all countries, and by the various tribes of mankind.

THE truth is, all former sacrifices seem altogether inadequate, in their own nature, and by the ordination of God, to reach the ultimate end, to be accomplished only by one sacrifice, of infinite value, *in the fulness of time*. Believers, in the first ages, might not, through a long train of ceremonies, and bloody sacrifices, see *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; but we, *upon whom the ends of the world are come**, can compare the several parts of the divine plan which are past, with one another, and plainly perceive to what conclusion they lead every contemplative mind. The object to them was, in many respects, evidently indeterminate, and, consequently, a weaker degree of faith, all that was required; but to us it is fixed, and certified by the clearest revelation, and, therefore, nothing but the greatest ingratitude, guilt, and misery, can follow our rejection of the son of God, who is our propiation with the father. *There can remain no more sacrifice for our sin*†.

* 1 Cor. x. ii.

† Heb. x. 26.

IN regard to the *design* of some of the ancient sacrifices, and the advantage of christians, St. Paul's argument is this; *if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ** And in regard to their insufficiency for the taking away sin, he gives this representation of the matter, in support of the gospel: *the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. It is not indeed possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when the son cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure! Then said I, lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all †.*

THEREFORE, when he said, *sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offerings for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein (which are offered by the law) and, lo, I come to do thy will, O God; the first was taken away, that the second might be established †.*

* Heb. ix. 13, 14.

† Heb. x, i. &c.

‡ Heb. x. 8, 9.

AND by the dignity of his person, and finishing the *work which was given him to do**, our blessed Lord hath, for ever, excluded all impostures from troubling the thoughtful ages, nations, or individuals of mankind, seeing *the sacrifice of himself †*, which he freely offered as a ransom for all ‡, hath, at all times, effectually answered the doubts, and satisfied the desires of every sinner, upon the face of the whole earth.

HENCE let every sinner, upon the face of the whole earth, say, with the *Seraphims* in heaven, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come §*; and again, with the *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands*, *worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing ||. Amen. Hallelujah.*

* St. John xvii. 4. † Heb. ix. 26. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 6.

§ Isaiah vi. 2, 3. Revel. iv. 8. || Revel. v. ii. 12.

DISSERTATION X.

OF THE TRANSLATION OF ENOCH.

GENESIS V.

MOST of the events, it has been well observed, which succeeded the fall of our first parents, till the period at which we are now arrived, nine hundred and eighty-seven years after the creation, appear to have been striking consequences of the sentence then pronounced against them. Justice only seems to have been exhibited to mankind; and believers themselves could not but find it difficult, to extract the promises of grace and immortality, from the obscure meaning of this prediction; *the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*. Hence religion could furnish but imperfectly the most powerful of all motives, to engage men in the service of God, which is, that *he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him* *. God was, therefore, pleased, at this time, to give an illustrious evidence of this truth, and hold forth to his church an image, anticipating the conquests which the Messi-

* Heb. xi. 6.

ah should, in the *fulness of time*, obtain over all the enemies of our salvation; namely, *the Translation of Enoch*.

IT must be confessed, that we have but few circumstances related concerning this man so highly privileged by heaven; and yet what we have, raise our thoughts of him very high.

FIRST of all, it is clear that he was famous, not only in the church of God, but also among idolaters themselves; who have said that *Iconium* is a city of *Hanac*, who lived three hundred years; that the inhabitants of the place, having enquired of their oracle, how long the prince should live, received for answer, that when he died they should all perish; which when the *Phrygians* heard, they made great mournings; and from thence came the proverb, to weep for *Hanac* *. See a remark on this, in an author quoted below †. Another, more directly speaking of this patriarch, says, that the *Babylonians* regarded *Enoch* as the founder of astrology among them; that the *Atlas* of the *Greeks* is *Enoch*, who had learned all things from angels; and had afterwards diffused knowledge among the *Phrygians* ‡. But though these testimonies support the argument, that *Enoch*, who was translated, was celebrated in after ages; they have no more solidity in them, than the story of the *Enochii*, the supposed descendants of the son of *Cain*, related before; who existed long before the flood, when the genealogies of mankind were changed, and all earthly traces of them lost.

* *Stephanus Byzantinus*, in voce *ἱκονιον*.

† *Bochart*. *Phal.* L. 2.

‡ *Euseb.* *Præpar.* Lib. 9. Cap. 17.

THE next thing we know, more certainly, is, that Enoch was a prophet; not altogether unknown by pagan nations. St. Jude gives him this character, and repeats some of his words: *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him**. From whence St. Jude had this fragment, it is not easy, if at all possible, to determine. There was, in the first ages of christianity, a book, known by the Jews, which bore the title of *the Prophecies of Enoch*; but the extracts which the fathers have given, convey no high idea of it. They have quoted it with contempt. When Celsus urged a passage in it against Origen, that father replied that the book had little authority with the Hebrews†. Tertullian, indeed, not only defends it with great warmth, and laments that every one is not as zealous to assert its authenticity as himself; but also pretends that it had been preserved with Noah in the ark; passed from his hands to the whole church; and that the Jews of his time only rejected it, because it was too favourable to the cause of christianity‡. This father was too sanguine, and very singular, in many of the opinions which he espoused. But still this work, notwithstanding it carried on it many marks of fable, might yet contain many noble truths; and the gift of inspiration enable St. Jude to discern those truths from falsehood.

* St. Jude, 14, 15.

† Origen. contr. Cels. Lib. 5.

‡ Tertull. de cultu Fæminæ.

THE desire of possessing so precious a relick, cost a celebrated person of the last age, immense pains and expence*; and after all, he was deceived by an impostor, who gave him the work of one Bahaila Michael, for the prophecy of Enoch. The author who writes the history of Ethiopia, searched that country, where the true copy was alledged to be, with the greatest care; and at last finding the pretended prophecy of Enoch, immediately discovered on it evident marks of fraud†. The exordium of the supposititious piece is this; *In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This is the book of the mysteries of heaven, and earth. It contains the secret of the first and the last tabernacle, and of all creatures. Abba Bahaila Michael learned it of Tamhana Samai. The angel who was sent to him said, hear: The Father is not before the Son: The Son is not before the Father: nor the Holy Ghost before the Father and the Son, &c.*

RETURNING to the history, it shews us, that Enoch possessed greater qualities, than those that have been yet mentioned; he was a good man and singularly righteous‡. Moses gives him this compleat character, when he says, *Enoch walked with God*. The expression being utterly insusceptible of any than a good sense, there are but few rabbins who have ventured to attribute any other to it; and yet one, in

* Peiresc, ou Nicolas Claude Fabri, Sieur de Peiresc; qui se rendit si habile en toute sorte de sciences, & principalement dans la connoissance de l'antiquité, qu'elle n'avoit rien eu de curieux qui fut caché à lui. Grand Dict. de Moreri.

† Ludolph. Comment. in Hist. Ethiop. Lib. 3, Voyez aussi Le pere Cavazzi, traduite par J. B. Labat.

‡ For the distinction, see Rom. 8. vii.

Buxtorf's Bible *, is said to understand by *walking with God*, inconstancy in principles, as if Enoch had only a slight and transient piety, the shadow and outside garb of virtue. But St. Paul, if we give any credit to his authority, says, that *he pleased God*, which expresses more, in few words, than the most elaborate elogiums. And what can we possibly think of men of learning, who indulge such fancies, in all religions, both in ancient and modern times!

WE see, likewise, in the clearest manner, that a piety so eminent was crowned with the highest privilege that God had ever granted to the sons of men, since the fall; which was, to be exempted from that law, which condemns all Adam's posterity to death. Reading the relation Moses gives us of this important event, it is impossible not to wish, with some Christians themselves, that he had enlarged his account of it. *God took him*, is, however, all that is said, lest some, who are over-curious, should have required every circumstance. Some interpreters who professed christianity, and whose judgment was certainly very good, have asserted that Enoch died like the rest of men. But if they had admitted the authority of the epistle to the Hebrews, where it is literally declared, that *by faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death* †, it is impossible any doubt could have remained of the event. Those who reject all other testimonies, except what this book contains, may likewise see the strongest presumptions of this fact. Moses at the end of every patriarchal life, both before and after Enoch, adds, *and he died*: This

* Tom i. Heb. xi. v.

file, as if it had been purposely chosen, distinguishes every relation. And is it to be supposed that he would have changed it for Enoch alone, if the lot of that holy man had been exactly the same as others? Besides, the manner in which the translation is described, represents it as a favour granted to the efforts which he made to please God: *Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.* For though death conducts good men to a blessed life, and God, by shortening their days, abridges thereby the period of their sufferings on earth; yet, in the first ages of the world, it clearly appears, that long life, for the most part, was the temporal recompense of virtue. In short, if there was nothing extraordinary in Enoch's exit from this world, that man, so distinguished by his piety, might complain that he lived only 365 years, while most of the antediluvian patriarchs reached near a thousand. This argument, which has lost all its force under the gospel, was of great weight in preceding periods, when commonly it fell out that the wicked alone did *not live out half their days* *. It made such an impression upon the Jewish commentator †, who understood what is here said concerning Enoch to signify an ordinary death, that he rather chose to sully the memory of that patriarch, than allow himself, or others, to imagine, that God would snatch away a good man in the midst of his course. *Enoch walked with God*, says he, *that is, was a just man, but his righteousness was so inconstant and fleeting, that he quickly passed from virtue to vice: and this was the reason that God hastened his death.*

* Psal. lv. 23.

† R. Jarchi, alias Raschi, alias Isaaki in Genes. v. 24.

BUT

BUT if some of the Jewish Doctors have reversed the idea which Moses plainly gives of the life of this patriarch, others of them have formed juster notions, and spoken of his departure from this world, as a consequence of his piety*. And among Christian interpreters there is scarcely one of any name, who has not followed the same thought †.

IN what manner God disposed of this holy man, after his translation from the earth, writers different from one another, in a variety of respects, have much more contested. Mahometans place him in the fourth sphere of the sun. In the Koran the words are, remember Edris, who is Enoch, a just person, and a prophet: And we exalted him to a high place ‡. The impostor feigned that he found him there; when, in the twelfth year of his devotion, he was carried, in one night, from Mecca to Jerusalem, under the form of a mule, and from Jerusalem was raised to heaven, where he received all the mysteries of his religion §.

ANCIENT interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, assign the terrestrial paradise, of which we discoursed already, for the place of his residence. The most of our people, even of our learned men, says one of the Rabbins ||, think that Elijah entered into a body in paradise, where he lives, in the same state our first parents were before the fall; and Enoch also, in the same manner.

* R. Abarbanel in Genes. v. 24. Philo de nominum mutatione.

† Saurin.

‡ Al Koran, chap. xix. page 134. Sale.

§ M. Saut. Disc. vi, vol. 1, p. 70. Octav. Amster.

|| R. Kimchi in ii Kings, ii, 1.

OF the primitive fathers, the greatest part has adopted this opinion *. It has been said by some, that both of them should, at a certain time, return to the earth, and confute Anti-christ; that they should re-build the walls of Jerusalem; that their dead bodies should be in the streets of that city, which had been always the murderers of the prophets; that they are the *two witnesses* mentioned in the revelations. But these fancies are set forth here, for no other purpose but to expose them: Even they who have advanced such predictions, have given us no other motive to believe them, than the liberty they have taken in publishing them, without alleging one single solid proof in their support, or so much as plausibility itself.

IN regard to the real place of Enoch's happy abode, it may be sufficient to say, that, as Christians, we henceforth know no other paradise, than that which is represented to us in the holy scriptures, as a place where God gives the most illustrious proofs of his presence, and displays his glory and grace with the greatest majesty. To that happy mansion, our Lord prayed to his father that he might be restored; and said to the converted thief on the cross, *this day shalt thou be with me in paradise* †. St. Paul calls the same place, *the third heaven* ‡, and simply, by way of ex-

* Placens deo, cum Enoch esset homo, Dei legatione ad angelos fungebatur, et translatus est—quoniam angeli quidem transgressi deciderunt in iudicium; homo autem placens, translatus est in salutem.—Nunc dicunt presbyteri, qui sunt apostolorum Discipuli, eos qui translati sunt, translatos esse in paradisum in Eden. Irenæi L. iv. Cap. 30.—L. v. Cap. 5.

† St. Luke, xxiii, 43. ‡ ii Cor. xii, 2.

cellence, *heaven* *, in a multitude of passages. Thither Elijah was carried by a *whirlwind* †: And there we believe Enoch was translated.

THUS, in each of the three great periods of the church, there hath been one, taken up, soul and body, into heaven, that the hope which believers had conceived of their own future happiness, might be properly supported. Enoch was the first example, before the law, when it was peculiarly necessary; Elijah under the legal œconomy, at a time when universal corruption prevailed; and our Lord Jesus Christ, who opened the Kingdom of God upon earth, which the wisdom and goodness of God had determined to establish, from the beginning of the ages.

IN this manner, the divine providence hath so dispensed light in each of those three periods, that it hath appeared by degrees, till it shined in full splendor. It was a circumstance, highly favourable to the faithful of the old world, to see a good man disappear, and disposed of, after his sojourning on the earth, in another place than the grave. Those who lived under the second period, had the strongest presumption in their favour, when heaven was opened to receive one of their prophets, *in a chariot of fire* †. But to Christians, it is a demonstration, and like an anticipation of what they expect, to see *the finisher of their faith* §, go through all the intermediate spaces between human life and mortality, time and eternal existence. If the text may be so interpreted, hear the

* Heb. ix, 24.

† ii Kings, ii, 1.

† ii Kings, ii, 1.

§ Heb. xii. 2.

church triumphant addressing the portals of paradise, to open for his reception, and prepare themselves for his entrance, into the blessed habitations appointed for him. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord strong and mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory*.*

THE words of a poet, famous for his descriptions, might be borrowed here; but falling far short of the language of inspired authors, they are omitted, out of the profoundest respect for his talents and design †.

HAVING finished this subject, it is almost impossible not to reflect on the strange infatuation of some men, who say they believe the sacred writings; and yet deny that there are any traces of doctrines or examples, in the writings of Moses, indeed in the old Testament, from whence we can clearly infer that the people of God, in those ages, expected a future state. Here we see Enoch taken away from among men, at a very early period of the world; and it is perfectly reasonable to suppose, that his co-temporaries would believe him to be taken to another state of life. If, through increasing corruption, they had, for some time, lost the original principle, this event would necessarily revive it, and was designed and calculated to have this very effect. It is very certain, that the better sort of heathens were not without some strong

* Plasm. xxiv. 7.

† Milton.

presages of another state after this; and several of the philosophers spake great and excellent things concerning it: And can we imagine that the whole Jewish nation, the whole earth before the death of Moses, was entirely ignorant of this comfortable truth? There can be no doubt but the earliest men, the old patriarchs, and all the pious Jews who lived to our Saviour's time, did expect and hope for an *heavenly country*. Would they be less attentive to the nature of their own souls and faculties, than other men; to the strong appetites and desires of life in the human constitution; to the fears and presages of the wicked; and the necessity of rewards and punishments for vindicating God's providence? It is not to be imagined.

INDEED the gospel of Christ, hath made a much clearer revelation, and his own resurrection from the dead, given a much stronger demonstration of life and immortality, than ever the world had before.

DISSERTATION XL

Of the GENEALOGY from ADAM to NOAH.

GENESIS V.

THOUGH the subject of this Dissertation is, in part, antecedent in time, to that of the foregoing, yet the genealogy from Adam to Noah is placed here on account of the families inserted, in the Mosaic history, between Enoch, whose character and distinguishing privilege we have just now considered, and the latter of those patriarchs : And the age of the world, between the creation and the deluge will, very properly, be given.

In this chapter Moses describes the names and lives of the patriarchs, within that space of time ; with the age of every father, when every son was born. Now, if we add that of Noah, when the flood happened, to those aggregate periods, we shall form chronological tables, of the best authority, from the beginning of things, to their dissolution by water. Nor, in this calculation, and biographical view, shall we

we be altogether without the instruction and improvement, which we ought constantly to seek in all our researches, in the holy annals of truth and salvation.

At the first verse, we are told, *this is the book of the generations of Adam*; that is to say, this is the pedigree, or the genealogy of his descendants; as, in the first chapter of St. Matthew, it is said, *this is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ*, where his extraction is drawn from Abraham, to his own manifestation in the flesh. In the catalogue here presented, there is one thing, in the third verse, which may deserve a remark; namely, that Seth appears first in the list, when we know that before him Adam had both Cain and Abel born to him, whose names are both omitted. The reason of this seems to be, that as Abel died childless, and Cain was struck out of the line, as an atrociously wicked man, the progeny of Adam was reckoned from Seth, Abel's successor in his father's family, whom Cain had killed.

This circumstance, it has been thought, may give room to infer, that Cain and Abel themselves might not, perhaps, be Adam's first sons; and that both he, and the other patriarchs, might have several children, before those that are here set down; the design of Moses, in all probability, being only to give the names of such persons as would preserve the genealogy entire from Adam to Noah, through genuine ancestors, whether they were the eldest of the family or not*. But while no objection needs to

* Dr. Taylor's Scheme, &c. p. 173.

be made to this thought, on account of its repugnancy to any important principle in the Mosaic history, if it be wisely and reasonably applied; what others have imagined cannot yet be perceived, how it can, in the least, obviate any fancied difficulties, that critics and unbelievers have been perpetually raising, in regard to the connections first formed among the children of Adam's family. For it is evident that the first of them, whoever they were, must have married the nearest relations, by the permission of God, and as the necessity of the case then required.

To the suggestion, that Moses, like all other historians, only meant to give the pedigree of his own nation; and that no certain conclusions can be drawn from his history concerning the common origin of mankind, or whether they are at all to be derived from one root; to this suggestion, I say, it may be replied, that if any credit be due to the other parts of his writings, we may stretch our faith a little farther, and believe what he says of Cain and Abel also; that they were the first of Adam's sons, and Seth, in the line delineated, the successor of the latter; Adam the fountain of all.

ANOTHER thing, in this account, which strikes us with equal curiosity and astonishment, is the enormous space of time during which those antediluvians lived; Adam, Seth, Enos, and Cainan, nine hundred years and odds. Mahalaleel, eight hundred and ninety-five; Jared, nine hundred and sixty-two; and Methuselah, nine hundred and sixty-nine years. This last named person, though the eighth generation from Adam, lived co-temporary with him two hundred

dred and forty-three years, and, no doubt, conversed with him the greatest part of that time; and would have opportunities, abundantly sufficient, to receive from Adam a distinct account of what he knew concerning the creation, and all the transactions and events in the four first chapters of Genesis. Methuselah, therefore, dying only in the year in which the flood happened, would serve as a living chronicle of all the knowledge in the world, for the space of sixteen hundred and fifty-six years; of which Noah had lived six hundred, and so had time enough to receive all that knowledge from him, and may be well supposed to have carried it with him entire into the ark, from whence he communicated it to the new world. For his sons being only young, and all the patriarchs, who stand in this genealogy, dead, when he entered into the ark, things, as they were at that period, must afterwards be traced from him.

ONE reason for the long lives of the antediluvians may have been, that knowledge, without writing and archives, might be safely preserved, and incorruptly transmitted to future ages. It is allowed that the air and food, of which those wonderful men had the advantage, and the manner of life they pursued, might, in some measure, contribute to sound health, and lengthen out their days beyond the ordinary bounds. Among ourselves, in these latter ages, we have some very extraordinary instances of life, and alertness, being prolonged, almost two generations †. But all na-

N 2 tural
* That men lived so long in ancient times, we have the testimony of Manetho, Berofus, &c. Patrick on Gen. v.

† The illustrious Archbishop of Armagh, after giving many instances of longevity in former times, says, atque ut ad nostra tempora

tural causes being now found inadequate to such an effect, as to preserve life for nine hundred years and more, the phenomenon must be resolved into the will of the Creator only, and can be accounted for in no other way. The first men lived so long, that they might be the records, and conveyers to posterity, of religious affairs, at a time when those records could not otherwise be treasured up; and the knowledge of them must either have been totally lost, or miserably depraved, if men had lived no longer than seventy or eighty years, as they now do. Besides, their great age and strength, were the most effectual means to people the world speedily *, and bring all the necessary arts, in tillage, building, and cloathing, to greater perfection.

But to return to the matter; we see, at the twenty-first verse of the chapter, that Methuselah was the son

tempora propius accedamus: Thomas Ravennas in 5^o capite libri, De vita hominis ultra cxx. annos protrahenda, ad Julium iii. pont. scripti, inter alia, An. Christi, 1536. Zaconum quendam ex Lacedæmone, annis fere cxxx. et alium ex eadem urbe ultra annos cxix. supervixisse; et in ægei mari viros duos cxix.

Dux anglus Jacobus Weston, A. D. 1600. annos cxxxi. natum vitam finit. In Hibernia Desmonia Comitissa, circa annum vite cxi. defuncta. Laurentius quidam Scotus anno ætatis cxi. mortuus est. Unus etiam Senex Lutetia cxi. Et ut tandem concludamus, Thomas Parrus fuit cxi. Ex his igitur satis apparet, ad nostra usque tempora, nonnullus ultra annos cl. vitam produxisse. Chr. Sa. p. 203.

* There are several authors, who have formed calculations of the increase of mankind in the first world, and suppose, upon the moderate scale, that they had no children till they were one hundred years old, and none after five hundred, that there were in this world about two millions of millions of souls, which they think is a number far exceeding that of the inhabitants of the present earth. Shuckford's Con. Vol. i. p. 36.

of Enoch: And some very ingenious men have conjectured that his father gave him this name, from two Hebrew words *, which literally signify, *when he dieth, there shall be a shedding forth, or an inundation of water.* Allowing this conjecture to have a reasonable foundation, we may here see, as well as in many other instances, how facts have been changed, by nations ignorant of the sacred writings; and that both smaller and greater errors, in point of time, lie open to detection. For it is not at all improbable, that the Phrygian oracle, mentioned in the foregoing Dissertation, referred to the son of Enoch, and not to himself, when it pronounced, *that when he died, they should all perish* †. And admitting the criticism above to be just, Enoch must be supposed to have predicted the deluge, nine hundred and sixty-nine years, before it happened; with this circumstantial token of the event, that it should fall out in the year in which his son should die; as it certainly did. This some may think too refined and fanciful: And yet we have the authority of an apostle for asserting, that Enoch was a prophet,—perhaps, not inferior to any in after days, notwithstanding the shortness of his history; and might, therefore, foresee and foretel the deluge to that generation of men.

BUT, his distinguishing character having been considered already ‡, we proceed to Lamech, Enoch's grandson by Methuselah, the next patriarch in this list. Concerning him nothing remarkable occurs, except the name which he gave the first mentioned of his sons, Noah §, derived from a Hebrew root, signifying

* Heb. מָת כְּשֵׁל † Page 166.

‡ See Dissertation x. § Heb. מָת

to rest, or to take rest, or to take repose; saying at the same time, *this same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.* Of this text many explanations have been given: Some think Lamech might give his son this name, when he found that he had an extraordinary genius for agriculture, and was likely, by his useful inventions, to diminish the vast toil which had hitherto attended the tillage of the earth*: Others imagine that Lamech, being a good man, and believing his grandfather's prophecy, called his son Noah, because in his days mankind being swept away, there would be an entire cessation of all worldly business, the chief of which then was to plow and fertilize the earth, rendered sterile and unfruitful by Adam's transgression: And certain illustrious interpreters apply this prophecy to the enriching manure which was thrown over the face of the habitable globe, at the time of the deluge, as marle, sea-shells, and sea-sand; by whose saline and nutritious qualities, the stubborn and barren soil was mellowed and fructified, and hence mankind were comforted, concerning their work, and the toil of their hand, with regard to the ground which the Lord had cursed: The same prophecy has, likewise, been referred to the practice of employing beasts in tilling the ground, which before had been managed by men's hands; and to the grant made to Noah of eating flesh, till then, it is thought by many, totally prohibited†.

ADMITTING some of these expositions to be just, what cause of thankfulness have we, and to rejoice, that God, who alone can bring good out of evil, hath, among other advantages which we derive from the sins

* Bishop Patrick in Loco. † Synop. Critic Poli in Loco.

fins of the antediluvians, changed the earth from a
 wilderness of briars and thorns into a fruitful field, *even*
the garden of God ; and, assisting men in the cultivation
 of their genius, brought arts to the greatest perfecti-
 on ; by which we now enjoy comparatively what
 Noah's name signified, *rest and consolation*. But this
 belonging properly to another subject, we shall proceed
 to consider the moral causes which contributed to
 bring on that amazing and tremendous scene, *the*
flood.

OF THE GENERAL CORRUPTION OF MANHOLD

CEWESE

DISSERTA-

DISSERTA-

017041

DISSERTATION XII.

OF THE GENERAL CORRUPTION OF MANKIND.

GENESIS VI.

AT the last verse of the fourth chapter we read, *then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*; that is, in the days of Enos, so called perhaps, by Seth his father, to denote the weak and miserable condition of mankind, since the original apostacy. Whatever sense we put upon these words, they cannot, in the least, import that men did not call upon the name of the Lord, before this time, which was between two and three hundred years after the creation. The meaning may rather be, that, by the consideration of their miseries, they became awakened to be more serious and frequent in religious services, or began to hold more public assemblies. For families, to which religion was before confined, being now multiplied, mankind joined together, and met in larger societies and communion, for the more solemn service of God by sacrifices, and other religious offices; and *to call upon God*, comprehends all religion, private and public.

INDEED

INDEED many of the Jewish interpreters, with whom a very learned antiquary seems to agree, would have the words expounded thus; *then men began to neglect the worship of God; or were guilty of profanation, by invoking the name of the Lord* *. The Arabic interpreter, published by another great man †, gives the text this gloss, *then began men to apostatize from the worship of God*. But all such notions arising out of the ambiguity of the word *began*, which in one place signifies *to profane* ‡, other very learned and judicious men have opposed this interpretation; especially as Moses is here speaking of the pious family of Seth only, and nothing of Cain's wicked race. They, therefore, think the meaning is, that public forms of worship were now appointed, at set hours, or some other considerable improvements made in religious offices. And the Arabian Christians represent this Enos as an excellent governor, who, while he lived, preserved good order in his family, and when he died, called them all together, and gave them a charge to keep God's commandments, and not to associate themselves with the children of Cain §.

It has been, likewise, ingeniously conjectured from these words, that those who adhered to God, and his worship, began to give themselves a denomination expressive of their relation and regard to God;

* Apud Onkelum legitur *tunc incepisse homines non orare in nomine domini—Aut tunc inceperunt homines deficere a cultu dei—profanari autem in invocando nomine Jeeboe idem est, ac si dixisset Moses sacrosanctum illud nomen, quod totius universi creatorem et dominum designat, rebus creatis imple tributum*. Selden. de diis Syris, Proleg. Cap. iii. pag. 28, 29.

† Erpenius. ‡ Levit. xix 12. § Bishop Patrick in Loco.

in other words, they began to assume the title of *the sons, or children, of God*; to distinguish and separate themselves from the profane and irreligious, who neither feared nor served him *.

THIS, at least, appears certain, that the descendants of Cain and Seth formed two different societies, each of which followed the example of their ancestors. Moses says *Cain dwelt in the land of Nod*, which either signifies *fugitive*, or describes a country bearing that name. The friends of the first opinion insist that Cain wandered during his whole life; while others contend that Moses, by the land of Nod expresses no more than simply the place where this unnatural brother lived in exile. That place some have thought to be *the fields of Nyseus*, mentioned, many times, by profane historians †. He still went eastward, we know, from that country, where Adam had settled when he was thrust out of Paradise. In his short notes, a celebrated translator hath offered his opinion, that Nod was in that tract of ground where the *Nomades* afterwards dwelt, bordering upon *Scythia* ‡.

It is sufficient for us to know, that the posterities of Seth and Cain possessed different regions, and formed separate societies. But after the prodigious multiplication of the human race, which God ordained in the first ages, they had occupied the whole

* Taylor's Scheme, &c. page 176. † Saurin, Disc. vii.

‡ *Terra Nodi*: id est, agitationis & vexationis; hanc Nomadum esse puto in deserta Arabia, Babyloniae contermina, quae regio, respectu Cenabanzæ, sita est ab oriente Hedenem versus. Junius in Loco.

intermediate space; they began, like two distant colonies, extending their settlements, to unite. The children of the former, whom the scripture calls *the sons of God*, probably because they were attached to his worship and laws, were struck with the beauty they beheld in the daughters of the latter. They instantly attempted to remove the bars which separated them from creatures so full of charms. They contracted marriages with them, in which they observed no other laws, but those of their own lusts; and surrendering to those enchantresses their heart and their freedom, they surrendered at the same time their virtue and religion. For from this union proceeded what we see has always been the case, in the course of ages since, when a pure society has been mixed with a profane; that the good has been tainted by the corrupt manners of the bad, and a degenerate nation has never imitated the virtues of the more pious and just.

THIS is the simplest and most rational construction that can be put upon the words of the historian, in the holy text: *And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.* But notwithstanding the reasonableness of this comment, interpreters have raised on these words, and some that follow, the greatest difficulties.

SOME of the ancients have grounded an opinion upon a passage in the Psalms, where, of governors and magistrates, the character is, *I have said that ye*
are

are Gods *, that by *the sons of God*, in this place, we are to understand the phrase, of the great ones of the earth, who violently carried away *the daughters of men* of inferior rank and fortune, and made attempts upon their modesty.

AMONG the extravagancies of the imagination, we may rank the opinion of those, whom a great father of the church refutes †, who believed that, by *the sons of God*, either good or bad angels were intended. Whether the old version of the Septuagint might encourage this notion, it is not easy to determine ‡. Among both Jewish and Christian interpreters, ancient and modern, this fancy, however strange, hath had, it cannot be denied, many to support it. Even a wilder than this has been entertained, concerning *Incubes*, so called, like the nightmare, on account of their carnal commerce with women, by whom they had a monstrous issue; as many *deities*, in fable, are said to have had, by the unguarded *nymphs* of intermediate ages,

BUT to collect all that has been said, by writers on this subject, would be a task equally tiresome and unedifying. Those who delight in curious relations of this sort, may consult a variety of authors, who have not been sparing of their labours, to amuse others, and display their own learning ||.

THE meaning of the sacred historian, when he speaks of the children, who sprung from those mar-

* Psalm lxxxii, 6.

† St. Chrysost. Homil. xx, in Genes. v.

‡ Saurin, Disc. vii.

|| Voyez Le même Auteur, *ibid*

riages, hath occasioned, on the other hand, as many disputes, as the quality of the parties in the marriages themselves. His words, at the fourth verse, are these; *There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown.* It is here asked, who is the interpreter that dares decisively to pronounce what is the meaning of these expressions *? It is said, that Moses certainly intended from the beginning of his history, to make mankind stumble in a thousand curious questions, by difficulties which he seems purposely to throw in their way; and that it is almost impossible to derive any determinate knowledge from the original word which he employs here, and is translated *giants* †;

To this it may be answered, that no historian, tried by the rules of false criticism, could possibly stand the test, in a single page or sentence of his writings. But if descriptions of facts are to be taken in the plain and simple meaning in which they are given, no words can be clearer than these under our consideration. Moses asserts, *there were giants in the earth in those days*; Men of enormous stature and strength, which tempted them, as has always happened, through an abuse of power, to oppress others by violence; before the time when the sons of God married with the daughters of men: Probably produced at first by those who went down, and mixed with the posterity of Cain in the days of Jared. And the word

* M Saurin, Disc. vii, page 78.

† Heb. ענקים

children not being in the Hebrew, the text may be read thus: *Also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare giants to them, there was a new race of robust and unrighteous men added to those of the same nature and principles who were before; and possessed themselves of great power by the same practices.*

It has also been enquired, whether the word is to be applied to the body or the mind; as signifying the height of their stature, or their extraordinary courage. Here, in the same manner, as on all other parts of the holy scriptures of the like nature, commentators of the first rank, appear on both sides, equally formidable. *The Rephaims, the Emims, the Hahakims, and the Zam-zumims* *, have presented the same difficulties on this subject, which we shall slightly consider, as the passages occur. The clearest question is, if the relation of the spies, who were sent into the land of promise, in much later times than those we are writing of, is to be taken in a figurative or proper sense? *There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.* Whither, therefore, shall we go up? said the Israelites: *Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, the people is greater and taller than we, the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and, moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.* † On the side of the latter party, we are still asked, what the height of those giants really was? On this,

* Deut. ii. † Saurin. † Numb. xxxiii. 33. Deut. i. 28.

Jewish Doctors*, and others more safely to be followed, have advanced the most absurd traditions, contrary to common sense, and the very nature of things; and given the most improbable of all dimensions, on the two extremes. So critically, in short, has this matter been canvassed, that while some authors pretend, there are monuments in the bones and teeth of corps, of a monstrous size, which demonstrate the magnitude of those extraordinary men; there are others who maintain that those are no more than sports of nature, which, by a coagulation of different matter, are collected, and formed into an hard substance, assume the figure of an human body. The opinion of the first is founded on the testimony of travellers; and the second, alledging that they have too strong an itch for the marvellous, refer them to the stature of Goliath, of Og, King of Bashan, and some others.

THE plain meaning of the passage is this; the families of Seth and Cain, placed at first at some distance from one another, afterwards joined. And the consequence of this junction was, a scene of impiety, lewdness and injustice. The issue of the aforesaid marriages, growing up without any sense of religion and goodness, soon turned the scale; engaged themselves wholly in sensual ambitious pursuits, and imitating and assisting a flagitious race of giants, or strong, adventurous, and rapacious men, who were then on the earth, they affected to be men of renown for great and valorous exploits, by every method of oppression and violence. It appears, that they every

* Pirké Eliez. cap. xxiii. pag. 285.

where

where subjected others to their will and power, and extinguished a sense of God, both by *their wicked ungodly deeds, and their hard speeches against him**, and his holy laws. They despised his goodness, and the restraints of his government, till *all the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence, and every imagination of their hearts become only evil continually*: Which, in process of time, cut off all hopes of their amendment; when their minds were wholly intent upon gratifying ambition and concupiscence.

THIS was the effect of that criminal union, which *the sons of God*, as the scripture calls them, made with *the daughters of men*. The world changed its face, and presented nothing to the eye of the Almighty, but falsehood, lewdness, and injustice; the proper fruit of Idolatry. It might then be said, that not only giants, but the whole human race had plotted against heaven, and concerted to violate God's laws and worship. If credit may be given to an ancient tradition, preserved by an Arabian author†, the children of Seth, by marrying the daughters of Cain, broke the solemn vow they had taken to avenge the blood of Abel, and never to mingle with the blood of him who

* St. Jude, verse 15.

† Pervetusus codex arabicus M. in Bibliotheca Cottoniana, narrat Sethi familias posterosque montis occupasse cacumen in quo Adam sepultus est; Caini, Vallem in qua Abel ab eo occisus. Posteros item Sethi, ob easdem rationes, filios Dei dictos; et ob Abelem adeo Caino infensos ejusque nepotibus, ut solemnem se juramento obstringerent, *per sanguinem Abelis*. in Vallem se nequaquam, seu a monte sacro descensuros. Seld. de diis Syris. Prolegom. Cap. 111. pag. 46.—Autor Libri est Sain Ahen-Batrick qui historica in eo quamplurima de festis, Æris, patriarchis, aliis rebus, congestit.

had slain their brother. However this may be, the terms, here used, denote a general corruption: For, says Moses, *God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt: For all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.* And this sense of them being natural, why should the meaning of the words be restrained to a particular idea, as some interpreters have, seeing they comprehend the whole earth?

It is very pertinent to this subject to remark, that the sixth in descent from Cain, introduced the corruption of polygamy into the world, which could not fail to produce anarchy and unnatural lust. Lamech, we are told, *took unto him two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.* By a small transposition of letters, Lamech being the same with Melech, which signifies a King, some of the Jews have imagined that he was a great man: Such only, say they, had two wives in those ancient times; though they maintain it was lawful for any one that could support them, to have had more. But, notwithstanding the proneness of that nation to palliate practices of this sort, out of complaisance to those of their forefathers, and from their own inclinations, it is a great deal more probable that Lamech was the first, who ventured to transgress the original institution, which evidently appears to have been observed by the Cainites themselves till this time. His desire, perhaps, of seeing that *blessed seed* which was promised to Eve, might induce him to take more wives than one, that by the extraordinary multiplication of his posterity, some of them might prove so happy as to be the progenitors and parents. And this hope might be strengthened, by the notion that the right, which

O

was

was in Cain the first born, was now revived in himself; who being the *seventh* son from Cain, might have some reason to imagine, that the curse laid upon him, of being punished *seven-fold*, or, as he might understand it, for *seven generations*, was then removed; and his posterity restored to the privilege of fulfilling the promise.

It has been thought highly probable, that Lamech made his way to that crime of plurality, by the murder of the husband of one of his wives. This has been collected from his bitter exclamation to them on a certain occasion: *Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.* For, says the ingenious writer, there could have been no other cause so probable for his committing murder, as the gratification of his lust; especially in an age of the world when there seems to have been little occasion for contention about any property, except that of women; the earth not being yet peopled, and the beasts in great plenty †.

But though the words be thus rendered affirmatively in our translation, they have been read, by some, with an interrogation: *Have I slain a man? Or, so much as a boy?* that you should be thus afraid of my life ‡: On what account it may not be easy to conjecture. A supposition may be grounded on them, as likely as any, that at this period of time, family disturbances and quarrels prevailed, and the nuptial tie was grown uneasy and troublesome; as we see

* Patrick in Loco.

† Delany, page 113.

‡ Lud. de Dieu. Vide Patrick.

Lamech calls with great vehemence to his wives, and complains to them under that particular character, either for having seduced him to some wicked deed, or treated him with perfidy and ingratitude.

THUS, notwithstanding the divine manifestations which mankind then enjoyed, and the preaching of Enoch and Noah, and probably of other good men, the contagion of wickedness, by degrees, entirely infected them. Concerning the world, in this sad condition, the Almighty at length declared, probably from the *Schechinah*, in the small assembly of his worshippers, *My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh*: I will cease to address men, as I have done in former times, by vain exhortations to repentance; I will no longer speak to them by my prophets, such as Enoch was, and Noah now is, nor work inwardly in their hearts; for besides the extent and degree of their wickedness, they are grown wholly sensual in their inclinations and affections.

OF these words, this interpretation has, indeed, been given; *My breath, the life which I have given to men, shall soon be taken away from them, and I will destroy all of them in an hundred and twenty years, by a violent death*. But, notwithstanding the approbation of an eminent man*, this sense appears extremely forced, when it is compared with the consistency of the former. It is much more probable, that by *spirit* here is to be understood, that self-same *spirit*, by which, St. Peter says, *our Lord went and preached*, not personally, but by the ministry of the aforementioned prophets, *unto the spirits*, which are now, that is, at the time when

* M. Saurin, Disc. vii. p. 81.

the apostle wrote, *in prison*, or confined in the state of the dead, and reserved in safe custody to the day of judgment. This gloss appears evidently natural, from what follows in the same passage; *which spirits were disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was in preparing* *.

HENCE it was, that God, speaking after the manner of men, is said to *repent*, and to be *grieved* that he had made man on the earth; and, accordingly, formed the resolution to destroy that whole generation. The execution of this decree, however, would have been prevented, if the men of that age had turned to God by repentance and amendment: Noah was a preacher of righteousness to them, to try if they would hear his voice and live; in the same manner as Jonah was sent to Nineveh, to cry aloud in it, *yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown* †. And, if, by their humiliations, God had seen the works of the former, that they turned from their evil ways, they would have been pardoned and saved, as well as the latter. For when repentance intervenes, the judgments threatened are never inflicted. But incorrigible rebellion and wickedness, for the dignity and holiness of the divine government, and the safety of the world, must inevitably be punished.

AND yet, amidst this universal depravation and impiety, how indulgent was the goodness of the supreme ruler! *The days of man shall yet be an hundred and twenty years*. So long, as if God had said, will I wait on

* 1 Per. iii. 19, 20.

† Jonah. iii. 4.

sinners, under this dispensation, and no longer; then shall a flood of waters be brought in upon them.

THOSE hundred and twenty years, it is presumed, must respect the time of God's forbearance with that guilty race, and not the limits which were then prescribed to the life of men, in the following ages. It cannot, with truth, be asserted that an hundred and twenty years bounded human life, even for many long periods subsequent to the flood. According to the doctrine of the most celebrated Chronologers*, from the flood till the time the tower of Babel was built, men continued to live four or five centuries: From that period till the age of Abraham, they sometimes lived almost three: After that till Moses, an hundred and twenty, and an hundred and thirty: And in the reign of King David, human life appears to have been nearly of the same measure that it is now. The hundred and twenty years here mentioned, must therefore, refer to the time which was to elapse between the threatening denounced against the old world, and the final execution of it †.

THIS account of the corruption of mankind, may be closed with the reflection, that luxury, at the same time that it polishes life, and softens the mind, is al-

* Usserius, *ætas mundi* l.

† *Opinio multorum nostrorum sapientum est, Deum illis verbis, Dies hominis. &c. nequequam hoc spatium ponere vitæ humanæ, quippe postea fuisse qui multo longius vixerint, sed tantum indicare Noacho, prophetæ illius sæculi, dare se hominibus spatium cxx. annorum ad pœnitentiam peccatorum: cujus rei cunctos admonitos voluisse, ut nisi intra illud tempus pœnitentia ducerentur, scirent diluvio sibi pereundum. R. Menasseh Ben Israel Conciliator, Quæst. xxii. p. 30. Per omnes partes.*

so the source of innumerable evils: It begets a disposition to injure others in their property; and such a disposition, armed with offensive weapons, naturally excites all kinds of insolence and outrage to our fellow-creatures. The process is extremely evident in the historical sketches here given of the first ages of the world. Jabal seems to have been the first in Cain's family, who brought the art of tent-making, folding flocks, and all other parts of pasturage, to perfection; and taught men, when the grass was all eaten up in one place, to remove their cattle, and fix their habitations in another. His brother Jubal invented many *stringed* and *wind* instruments of music*, and instructed men to play upon them, in the same manner as Apollo afterwards did among the Greeks. These were the sons of Lamech by Adah. By Zillah he had Tubal-cain, who began to melt metals, and make all sorts of weapons, and warlike arms, of *brass and iron*, and is probably the very same with the Vulcan of ancient times. His sister's name was Naamah, which signifies fair, or one of a sweet aspect. She may have been the heathen Minerva; it is said that she mixed *colours* and *painted*. Here we see the symbols of improved and elegant societies appearing, and have seen corruption, nevertheless, in a superior proportion, for which the displeasure of the Almighty was just ready to be manifested.

WE may, therefore, conclude that religion and righteousness alone are the soul and support of the universe; and when they are destroyed, no worlds, nor men in them, can possibly exist; because their existence would be to no purpose; nay, in direct opposi-

* Heb. נָכוֹר וְשֹׁבֵב.

tion to the perfections and designs of the great governor of all. And while the holy scriptures not only assure us, that the wages of sin is death, and constantly affirm that the impenitent workers of iniquity shall be cut off, they give us, likewise, a true and just account of past events, and of the dreadful judgments of God upon the guilty. *Now all these things that were written before, were written for our instruction; and happened unto former ages for examples unto us, upon whom the ends of the world are come**. To those writings let us give the most watchful attention, as unto lights shining in a dark place; knowing this, that no prophecy, or practical inference from the scripture is of any private, temporary or national interpretation†: all are to hear and fear,

* 1 Corinth. x 11.

† 2 Pet. i 19, 20,

THIS is the end of the world, for which the glorious witnesses of former ages had been waiting. The gradual preparation, now passing itself in the course of this holy page. But in the words of the apostle, "God, converting his world, will also convert us, that we may bring forth much fruit unto glory." It is the will of God, that he might be the Father of many sons, which was also to be the Father of the church by the Holy Spirit. His Spirit, through the means of condescension, obtained the distinction of him. Now, as it was said, "I will be Father to the fatherless, and Merciful, and Merciful, like Father, will be Father to the fatherless." Some, indeed, have supplied, by their means, the want of the Father in the Father's house. This is not less vain than the fancy which

DISSERTA

DISSERTATION XIII.

Of the FLOOD.

GENESIS VI, VII.

THIS dreadful overthrow of the world, for which the growing wickedness of former ages had been making gradual preparation, now presents itself in the course of these holy pages. But, *in the midst of wrath, God, remembering his mercies **, which have been of old, even for ever †, chose Noah, and hid him in the day of his anger ‡, that he might be the restorer of Adam's posterity, which was about to be swept off the earth by the Deluge. His piety, through the divine condescension, obtained this distinction for him. *Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations*, says Moses, and Noah, like Enoch, *walked with God*. Some authors have supplied, by their imagination, a description, wanting in the sacred books, of the virtues which these words may be supposed to express. This is not less vain than the fancy which

* Habak. iii. 2.

† Psalm xlv. 6.

‡ Zephan. iii. 3.

others have entertained, that it was by the assistance of judiciary astrology, that this patriarch foresaw the calamity which was soon to fall on the human race. No words can more expressly affirm, that he was *warned* of it by an immediate revelation from God, than those we have in the relation of Moses, and in St. Paul's account of the fact to the Hebrews*. And besides the revelation of the catastrophe, he was afterwards instructed by what means he was to preserve himself from it. God commanded him to build *a vessel, or an ark*, of which himself prescribed to him the materials, the form, and the dimensions. Noah, without delay, expressed his humble and entire faith, in the divine monition, by applying himself, according to the instructions he had received, to the building of that sanctuary, for the safety of his own person, of his family, of creeping things, of birds, and of four-footed beasts.

THAT Noah was an hundred and twenty years in building the ark, seems to be a notion which the inattention of many interpreters may have contributed to encourage. It has been said, that the sight of such a structure, advancing in size and compleateness, before their eyes, and every stroke that was given to it, rendered the inhabitants of the old world utterly inexcusable, if they did not repent of their evil ways, and earnestly seek for pardon. The patience of God has been thought concerned in this circumstance; the exhortations which Noah would address to the men of that time; and the fervent prayers he would prefer to heaven on their behalf. These,

* Heb. xi. 7.

indeed,

indeed, are fine reflections; but yet we are not warranted to judge by them of an historical fact. The world had otherwise sufficient notice of the impending destruction: God had made it publicly known to that whole generation, by the ministry of his prophet; and the time allowed them for reformation, was a striking proof of his forbearance. Noah might piously embrace every opportunity of calling sinners to repentance, and beseech the mercy of heaven to bestow that grace upon them.

In regard to things even of this nature, the want of discussion may raise in the mind many perplexing mistakes. Supposing the ark to have been *an hundred and twenty years* in building, there must have been a concurrence of miracles, to prevent those parts of it from rotting which had been first constructed, till the other parts were finished; and to keep the whole fabric in a condition to answer the end for which it was designed, during a long space of time before it was employed.

BUT Moses says nothing from whence we can conclude, what time precisely Noah was in constructing the ark. There are in his words sufficient evidence, however, to refute the opinion that is generally entertained. It is demonstrable that Noah was five hundred years old when Shem, Ham, and Japhet were born to him. It is also clear, that when he received the command to build the ark, those very sons were married. *Make thee an ark; for, behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.* But
with

with thee will I establish my covenant : and thou shalt come into the ark ; thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with thee. For the end of all flesh is come before me.* After this, no command appears for building the ark, into which Noah entered in the six-hundredth year of his age ; and, therefore, no certain conclusion can be drawn concerning the time that was spent in preparing it. This account of the matter is farther confirmed, by the tenth verse of the eleventh chapter, where we read, that *Shem was an hundred years, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood* ; which corresponds with the reckoning going before ; that at his birth, Noah was in the fifth hundred year of his age ; and he himself, according to the course of things in those times, must have been married only a little before that event : Consequently the foundation of the ark could not be laid so long before the flood as some have imagined.

BUT while this stricture is made on the one side, the other must not pass uncorrected. There have been divines of certain nations, whose warm fancies †, and talents for controversy, have exceeded proper bounds : And it plainly appears, that they have mistaken the manifestation of the divine patience, and the incorrigibleness of the antediluvian transgressors, in the case now before us. The words, *My spirit shall not always strive with man : yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years*, those commentators think, were not spoken to Noah, an *hundred and twenty years* before the flood, but express a resolution to destroy

* Heb. ברית
viii. p. 85.

† Athan. Kircher. M. Saurin, Disc.

the earth, which the Almighty had formed within himself: And that it was not till a long time after, that the patriarch was honored with this particular revelation, *the end of all flesh is come before me*. But establishing the concession which has been already made, that the ark was not an *hundred and twenty years* in building, it will, nevertheless, be impossible to admit that the period of God's forbearance was a secret known only to the divine mind: *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, without positive declarations concerning it? Or who hath been his counsellor?* Besides, if he had not spoken to them, the wicked and sensual men of that age, *would have had a cloak for their sins* †. It must, therefore, on every principle, be believed, that they had timely and the most unequivocal intimations of their ruin, if they delayed their repentance: And Noah himself might remain ignorant of the method, by which *the grace he had found in the eyes of the Lord*, was to be shewn till a few years before *the measure of iniquity was full* ‡.

THE form of the ark has been as much contested, among interpreters, as the time of its construction. Moses says, it was made of *Gopher wood* ||, a term not to be found in any other part of the sacred writings; and, therefore, cannot be explained by those writings themselves. The greater part of commentators, however, have determined that it was of *Cypress*: A wood, as travellers tell us, very plentiful, in those parts of *Assyria*, where the ark is supposed to have been made. The sacred historian farther informs us, that there

* Rom. xi. 34.

† St. Mathew, xxiii. 32.

‡ St. John, xv. 22.

|| Heb. גפר

were rooms in it, and that the whole was pitched within and without with pitch: That the length of the ark was three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. It was, therefore, like a large chest; and, in our measure, four hundred and fifty feet in length, seventy-five in breadth, and forty-five in height. The three stories, or divisions, that were in it, whether they were by the height, the length, or the breadth of it, we know not. The door of the ark was set in the side thereof. And, as the Hebrew word * literally signifies, it had a window, which may be a collective term for many windows; as it is very unlikely that such a vast building had but one. Indeed some of the Jewish commentators have been of opinion, that it was lighted by a precious stone †.

HERE then, in the kind command and instructions given to Noah, we have another illustrious instance of the Almighty's regard and condescension towards integrity and innocence. Him, and his family, because he was a just man, and perfect in his generation, God was graciously pleased to distinguish by a miraculous preservation; that from so good a stock, when the flood should be over, the human race might be again propagated, and religion restored in the world. With him God purposed to establish his covenant; and through him, and his faithful family, were the grace and blessings of the governor of the whole earth, especially the gradual schemes of redemption, to have their full effect.

* Heb. *mar* † R. Jarchi, in Gen. vi. 16.

MOSES saying no more on this subject, it may be left to architects to enter deeper into it: Nothing should have made us touch upon it, unless it had been a part of the sacred relation, to which many odious objections have been raised.

A LEARNED and ingenious prelate hath gone a great length towards obviating all of them*, in his compleat and precise idea of the ark, and it's capacity to hold every thing that Moses says it contained: And others†, to whom we refer, have followed him in the same tract, and found sufficient provision for all the creatures that could be in it.

WHEN the ark was finished, Noah, *the eight persons*, according to the expression of St. Peter, namely, his wife, his three sons, and their wives, entered into it. There went also with him, seven pair of every species of *clean* animals, and of *unclean* one pair. The historian, whose very words these are, in regard to clean and unclean beasts, gives us no information, whether this distinction was established before that time, or was then ordained, or is only mentioned, by way of accommodation to the notions of the Jews at the period when he wrote. It is, however, probable, from the circumstance of taking only one pair of unclean animals into the ark, and seven pair of the other, with a view to his own subsistence and that of his family, if other provision was spent, during the flood, and to offer some of them in sacrifice when the desolation should be over; it is probable, I say, that

* Wilkins, Bishop of Chester.
Grave, *Jour. de Paris*.

† Peletier, Cumberland,

this distinction was not altogether unknown to Noah in those early times. We have translated the word by *seven pair*, and not *seven animals*, as some interpreters have done. The text, indeed, seems to have no ambiguity in it: *Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens*, the male and his female.*

ON this part of the subject, many a witty caviller has enquired, how it was possible for Noah to collect such a number of all kinds of *beasts, and birds, and creeping things*, as it is said were lodged in the ark with him; seeing many of them are immensely large, many fierce and wild, and to be found only in sequestered and uninhabited corners: And seven days were only given him to complete his embarkation. With this apparent difficulty, many a stout infidel has affected to be hard set.

BUT absurd as this matter may appear to men of this class, very remote tradition has preserved the memory of the fact. An ancient author, describing the deluge, says, that all creatures went *pair and pair* into the ark†. The supposition of an interpreter, who asserts that they flocked to Noah naturally, through fear of the increasing waters, appears not sufficient to explain what the sacred history relates on this occasion‡. Some Jewish doctors have taught that God appointed an angel to every species of animals, and served himself of the ministry of those spirits at this conjuncture§. The truth seems to be, that those beasts reptiles and fowls, were not brought together by the

* Heb. שבעה שבעה

† Lucian de Dea Syra.

‡ Voy. Buteo de l'Arche de Noë.

§ Pirké Eliez. C. xxiii.

care and assiduity of Noah and his family, but were either rendered docile and obsequious to his voice, or sent in to him after a miraculous manner, by the direction or wonderful power of God. *For it was said to him, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.* And all that Noah had to do was to make provision for this heterogeneous household; agreeable to the following command: *Take thou unto thee of all food that it is eaten, and thou shalt gather it unto thee, and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.*

WHEN the work of this week was finished, and Noah and his family, with the beasts, the fowls, and the creeping things, had entered into the ark, God no longer saw any thing on the earth, which could determine him to suspend the design which he had formed of drowning it with water. Moses says it was in the six hundredth year of Noah's age that the fatal purpose was executed; in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month: That is of the civil year, and in the month which we call October: Consequently in the year of the world, one thousand six hundred and fifty-six; four hundred and forty-five years before the calling of Abraham; eight hundred and seventy-five before the departure of his posterity from Egypt; one thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight before the destruction of the first temple by the Chaldeans; and two thousand three hundred and forty-eight years before the Dionysian æra of Jesus Christ*.

ANOTHER calculation, falling short of this, fifty-six years, between the flood and the birth of the savi-

* See the table in the first Dissertation.

our of the world, has been made by an author of great erudition; who attempts to prove his hypothesis by Chaldaic and Egyptian fables, with which he presents us, and confirms them with the Macedonian and Roman*. But whether we are to pay more respect to the sacred chronology, assisted by well known records, or to characters very obscure, and of uncertain interpretation, let every one deliberately judge.

MOSES, in his manner of describing this dreadful overthrow of nature, has hardly left any difficulties about the two principal questions which have been so much agitated, by men of all countries and professions. It is, first, asked, if the deluge was so universal, as to inclose in its bosom the whole terrestrial globe; or if the divine vengeance was confined to the habitable part of it, which alone being guilty, appears alone to have deserved extermination? And, next, from whence was drawn the prodigious quantity of water necessary for such an inundation?

IN regard to the first question, the historian says, *the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beasts, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. No expressions can suggest to the mind a stronger idea of an universal desolation.*

* Guill. Bonjour, Selectæ Dissert.

ON the second question, Moses says, *the same day in which the Lord shut Noah in, were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.* By the *fountains of the great deep*, interpreters, for the most part, understand those vast and innumerable cavities, which are in the bowels of the earth, and through which lakes, and rivers, and seas have communications with one another, as through so many subterraneous pipes. Certain solid bodies, and collections of water, shut up in the clouds, by their own gravity being drawn down to the earth, the Jews called the apertures, which they were supposed to make in falling, *the windows of heaven*. In this sense it is said, that *God commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors, or the windows of heaven, and rained down manna upon his people to eat* *. Thus Moses' system concerning the flood seems to be this; that the Almighty, having called forth all the waters which were under the earth, and condensed the clouds exceedingly, in order to form more, employed them in drowning the world. Yet, notwithstanding this intelligible representation, other writers, on these points, have given their fancies the greatest liberty. And, therefore, departing from the text, for a little, we shall relate, with the utmost historical brevity, some of the difficulties that have been raised on the Mosaic history, in this place.

THOSE who confine the deluge to a part of the world, alledge, that the design of it being to punish transgressors, the scourge could hardly be universal; when, in the course of sixteen centuries, the world

* Psalm lxxviii. 23, 23.

could not be compleatly peopled, seeing it is not all inhabited at this very day. And it is incredible that God should extend his judgments farther than there were delinquents and malefactors.

To this objection, it is opposed that the inhabitants of the world were then very numerous; and that the waters which overspread such extensive parts of the globe as their settlements must necessarily occupy, would by the ordinary laws of nature, cover others also, unless a miracle should obstruct and suspend them in the air. It is argued besides, that conclusions drawn from God's designs, are rarely just, because he hath often more views than one, while only one is attended to by men, and that what may be useless to one purpose with which we are acquainted, may serve another of which we are ignorant. If, for instance, the universality of the deluge was not necessary for punishing sinners who lived at that time, it might be appointed to convey greater ideas of God's power to the guilty in after ages; and to make the religious part of the world admire his mercy, which kept closely locked up, desolating floods sufficient to destroy the whole earth, from breaking forth on the rebellious, when they have been impiously leagued against him. God might, likewise, propose by the universal deluge, that men should every where find, by its ravages, marks of his hatred to iniquity, and motives to avoid it; in the same manner as the curse pronounced upon the ground where Adam and Eve dwelt, affected every other part of it possessed by their descendants. A certain author is of opinion that the earth at first bore a resemblance to the human body in innocence; and that it was necessary to

212 DISSERTATION XIII

give a constitution to the one, suitable to the other, in a state of guilt *.

It is said by those who limit the flood to a part of the habitable world, that the universality of it implies a contradiction; except there should have been a new creation of waters, which is so far from being notified in the sacred history, that it seems to contradict it, seeing Moses expressly says that they came from the windows of heaven, and from the fountains of the great deep. Though the Almighty should have collected all the waters which are dispersed through the world, in the air, in the caverns of the earth, and in the vast cavities of the ocean, they would not have been sufficient, according to them, to have raised the flood fifteen cubits above the highest mountains of the earth. It is farther said, though God should have condensed the whole atmosphere which surrounds our globe, and turned it into water, it would still have been insufficient for an universal inundation; seeing it has been demonstrated by undoubted experiments, that the gross air which we breathe is eighty times more rare than water; so that to make any given quantity of water out of condensed air, there must be a volume of the latter eighty times larger than that of the former †. The argument is, yet strengthened by the consideration, that there is no gross air above a certain height of our hemisphere, where matter becomes more subtle and less condensed. The objection, in short, drawn from the exorbitant quantity of water necessary for a general deluge, has been carried so far, that some have asserted, that twenty times more water

* M. Bernard, *Nouv. de la Repub. des Lettres.*

† Edm. Halley, in *act. Philosoph.*

than there is in the ocean, would not cover the terrestrial globe. It was this difficulty, no doubt, which induced a celebrated writer to contrive, that a comet, flying off at the extremity of its ellipsis, should enter a section of the earth's orbit, and so crush its arch, and envelope it in watry vapors, with all its productions †.

The answer is, that no experiments, nor even the whole accumulated knowledge of man, can possibly ascertain, with precision, to what height the waters supposed to have been collected, or formed by the condensation of the air, would exactly rise. A certain author affirms that the *Volga* furnishes every year the *Caspian Sea* with as much water as is necessary to cover the whole earth †. If this be thought an extravagance, what would we think if the contents of the *Orellana*, of *Rio de la plata*, and the *Oronoque* were added? not to mention *St. Lawrence*, the *Ganges*, *Niger* and the *Nile*: which are all supplied by copious subterranean springs, and some of the rains that fall on the adjacent countries, without the smallest diminution of the ocean. All these, with this vast reservoir, would furnish a quantity of water, almost immense. And besides these sources, to effect the flood, God might modify other parts of matter the most subtle, and convert them into the same element. As to the mountains, they say, that though some of them appear extremely high, there are none of them of an extraordinary perpendicular elevation. *Olympus*, so extolled by the Poets, is only, in that direction, one mile and an half, and about seventy paces. The same

* Ray, on the Deluge.

† Buffon, Hist. nat.

† Ray.

height is ascribed to *Pelion*. Mount *Athos*, which is said to throw its shadow as far as the Isle of *Lemnos*, notwithstanding the enormous height it was thought to be of, by an ancient author*, has, in late times, been found to measure no more than two miles perpendicular †. Another writer hath fully exhausted this subject ‡.

By those, who restrain the deluge to the part of the world that was inhabited only, it has, last of all, been suggested, that the living creatures, which went with Noah into the ark. could not possibly travel so far, in so short a time, as to arrive at the place where it was built; nor could they, on account of the slowness of some of them in moving, return to their former habitations, in less than twenty thousand years; consequently, that they could not have been found at this day, if the countries where they have been discovered, had not been preserved from the waters of the flood §.

To this final effort of ingenuity, it has been answered, that the terrestrial globe has undergone innumerable changes since the days of Noah: That the flood, supposing it to have been universal; even local inundations, and violent earthquakes, must have changed dry ground into watry-springs, and turned rivers into a wilderness ||: That three quarters of the earth are evidently contiguous, and it is not yet plain that the fourth is not also. A miraculous providence may likewise be urged on this occasion. One thing

* Pliny.

† Stillingfleet orig. sacr.

‡ Vossius Pomp. Mel.

§ Vossius.

|| Psalm cvii. 23, &c.

is certain that animals of the slowest motion are, at this day, at a prodigious distance from the place, where, the very objector will allow, Adam gave them names in the beginning. And if twenty thousand years were necessary for them to go thither, how could they have yet arrived? The very answer which this learned man must give to the objection, will refute the reason he alledges against the universality of the deluge.

It has been said, that though the words of the historian concerning this event, be seemingly express, they should yet be qualified according to the subject to which they are applied: That the waters fell with such rapidity, and in such abundance, that the retreat of the wicked, to the smallest distance, was impossible: That several of the productions of the earth, which are taken for wrecks of the flood, are nothing more than *sports of nature*, which has given a certain form often fanciful, to some parts of matter: That the concurrence of several natural causes, such as winds, and an extraordinary compression of the air by vapors, has often raised liquid masses, and prevented them, for some time, from diffusing themselves, according to the settled laws of material substances,

On the other hand, it is urged, that the words of Moses must be taken literally, and in their full extent; *the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered; fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and all flesh died that moveth upon the earth: That Noah, his family, and the animals staid in the ark, till the face of the ground was dry: That if the flood had not been*

been universal, God would have conducted them to a place of refuge, and some of the guilty might have escaped with them: That nature manifestly bears on it traces of that event, which can never be erased, from mountains, vallies, and the midst of rocks: That waters run to their level, and cannot be suspended without a miracle, not to be supposed, in this case, where none is mentioned: And that by the concussion, or agitation of the waters, they might rise *fifteen cubits* above the highest mountains, so long as to sweep the human race, and beasts from thence, though they did not continue at that standing depth. These speculations grounded on the holy text, in a great measure, and the authority of the sacred writer, plainly induce us to conclude in favour of an universal deluge.

THIS subject a very ingenious writer hath treated with great erudition, and a force of genius deserving the admiration of the learned; but his *theory* * is destitute of facts and observations. He represents the earth, before the flood, as a globe, whose surface was equal and uniform, without mountain, steep, cavern, lakes, pools, seas or rivers. He encloses all the waters in nature, in the bowels of the earth, as in a thick and polished shell. This shell, he supposes, was broken and crushed, by a divine vindictive power, for the extermination of mankind: And that by this act, all these waters gushed out with great impetuosity, and drowned the world. This scheme has

* T. Burnet, Theor. Sacr. Telluris.

DISSERTATION XIII. 217

had but few followers, and has been refuted at great length*.

AN opinion more generally followed, in regard to this subject, we have in an *essay towards a natural history of the earth*†. The author, with the most of philosophers, imagines that there are subterraneous caverns full of water; that by these Moses understands *the great deep*, and the heathens *Erebus*; that between these, and the waters of the ocean, there is a continual communication through certain fissures which join one another; and that there is even a perpetual circulation of the waters in our atmosphere. He thinks, likewise, that near this abyss there is a constant and uniform heat diffused through all the interior parts of the earth; that earthquakes and volcanoes proceed from this heat in the centre, which not being always equally distributed on every side, is collected in one place, and there rarifies, to an extreme degree, the waters of *the great deep*, and makes violent efforts on those parts of the earth, by which it is confined; in the same manner, perhaps, as a redundancy or stagnation of the nervous influence in the human body, often bring on palsies. By the mediation of this heat, he alleges, the waters of the ocean were raised above the earth at the deluge; and that those of the *great deep* immediately followed them. This system the author left unfinished.

* Keil's Theory of the earth. † Woodward.

A GREAT mathematician enlarged and arranged those schemes; but, very different from the rules of his profession, he proved nothing*.

ANOTHER theory, in the form of a philosophical dream, has been suggested. If, says the author, we whirl upon its centre a round vessel half full of water, till the water hath fully caught the swiftness of the vessel, and then stopping it suddenly, the water will continue to move, and even with so much force, that it will overflow the edges of the vessel: In like manner, if God stopt the rotation of the earth upon it's axis, the waters of the sea would be thrown from all parts with violence on the land†. The author offers this only as a philosophical dream, and thereby prevents all objections.

As the fine elastic air, which is diffused all round the globe, cannot be totally excluded from any part of nature, even the bowels of the earth, some have thought that the eruption of the subterraneous waters would be naturally produced, by the efforts such quantities of that air, as had been collected and pent up, would violently make, to recover their freedom, and mix again with their kindred element, when many perforations, and large holes were made, by the divine power, in the outward surface. In this way, indeed, the waters entangled and propelled, might, probably gush forth, not in small spouts, but tremendous torrents, like those which are seen to

* Whiston. † Scheuchzer's Dissertation, addressed to the Academy of Sciences 1708. Voy. Journal des Savans, Octobre 1713.

fall from the clouds in the Indies. Among all those theories one thing is very observable, namely, that the authors of them, however much they may differ, in respect to the application of natural causes for the destruction of the old world, do all agree in this, that the work was evidently miraculous, in regard to the direction. And they, who have attempted to account for it any other way, are found to have departed just so far from philosophy and experiments, as they departed from revelation.

A MEMORIAL, deserving high encomiums, was drawn up on the same subject, of still a latter date; but death carried the author from the waves of human life, before he had completed his design*.

OTHER systems might be produced, but there is too much co-incidence in them with those which have been already sketched; and perhaps they do not come nearer the truth. Whatever means the Almighty employed to collect the waters of the deluge, *it rained upon the earth forty days and forty nights*, and the waters remained on it *an hundred and fifty days* before they *were abated*; which makes it evident that cataracts had not ceased all that time. An inundation so violent and so general would, indeed, occasion great changes over the whole terrestrial globe. But it is carrying the matter to excess, to assert that the axis of the earth was originally perpendicular to the plain of the *ecliptic*, that is to say, to the plain which passes through the line, in which the earth is moved round the sun; that every country

* M. Bourguet. printed at Amst. 1729.

enjoyed a perpetual spring; and that the flood changed this situation, and inclined the axis of the earth to the plain of the *ecliptic*, which now causes the diversity of seasons*.

BUT remote as we may be from such a flight of fancy, for which there is as little ground in nature as in revelation, every one must be obliged to acknowledge that the flood produced great changes on our globe. Lest we should contradict a theory, hereafter to be considered, we shall not pronounce what effect the flood might have upon the atmosphere itself, unless it may be supposed to have made it more moist and watry, by more copious exhalations, from the increased volume of the seas below. But torrents, rushing forth from all parts could not fail to shake and dismember various countries, to change the whole surface of the earth, and to render it susceptible of the many alterations which have likely happened in it since that fatal period. Plato introduces Solon relating that he had learned from the priests of the city of *Sais*, that there was formerly towards the mouth of the streights of *Gibraltar* an island called *Atlantis*, larger than Asia and Africa joined together†. Sicily, some have thought, was a portion of land broken off from Italy. The situation of the *low countries* hath made others believe that they were once a bed for the ocean. The authors are numerous that handle this subject, at great length‡.

THE imagination of man cannot be struck with a more dreadful spectacle, than that of the whole world,

* Th. Sa. C. 1. † In *Timeo*. ‡ Ovid *Metamorp.* Plin. *Hist. Nat.* Strabo. Ray's *Conseq. of the Deluge*.

and all the human race, buried under waves. The object presents to the mind still more gloomy thoughts, when we judge of the event at the tribunal of conscience and religion. *Fruitful land was turned into barrenness*, and chaos brought back upon the earth for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. The chastisement proceeded from a most righteous judge incensed.

EATING and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage*, thinking of nothing but sensual enjoyments, in contempt of every serious admonition, how would the careless and impenitent unbelievers be surprised, when all on a sudden the most terrible rains and inundations threatened their inevitable destruction. How would they be terrified! How would they condemn their own unbelief, and be compelled to own that there was a just and righteous God, who executed vengeance on all the incurable workers of iniquity! when there were such violent eruptions of the subterraneous waters, and such streams and spouts, with wrathful sounds, coming down from the sky, and meeting together so prevailed over the earth, as to put it beyond the wisdom of the wise, and the power of the mighty, to relieve either themselves or their friends! And the flood came, and took them all away†.

BUT let us pause, and reflect on this wonderful dispensation! Like all the rest of God's ways, it had a direct tendency to reduce the enormous degree of corruption, and to preserve and advance true religion.

* St. Matthew xxiv, 38. † Ibid. 39.

in the earth, the great end for which man had it given to him in possession. If the whole tainted body, so to speak, had not been cut off, the single family that remained sound, would soon have been infected, or destroyed by violent and bloody hands; and then the whole creation must have been ruined, and the schemes and purposes of God, from the beginning of the world, had been defeated. But when a total infection was prevented, the reservation of a select family for propagating their own kind, gave full scope to the divine counsels, and laid a foundation for the establishment of truth and righteousness in the new world; especially as Noah, a good man, would neither fail to communicate all he knew of the divine works to his posterity, nor to inculcate a strong sense of them upon their hearts.

BUT why do we speak of him only? His *commands* would not be needful to his children to keep the ways of the Lord*; his family would assist him in the service of religion. They, as well as he, had been eye-witnesses of the overthrow of sinners. They knew it was not an unfortunate accident, but occasioned by the depravation of the world. All the terrors of the deluge, must, therefore, give them the most sensible perception of the malignant nature of wickedness, that it is infinitely odious to God, and dreadfully pernicious to the offender. They must, for the space of twelve months residence in the ark, have been much affected with their singularly awful situation, convinced of the almighty power and universal dominion of the most high, the impossibility of escaping

* Gen. xviii. 19.

his resentment, what a fearful thing it is to fall into his hands *, and how much interest and duty, gratitude and fear, obliged them to reverence and obey him.

LEAVING the ark, what dismal appearances would present themselves—a desolate world—the ruins of palaces, towns, and cities—and the sadly changed faces of countries, once cultivated, fair, and flourishing, *where the spring was blessed, the pastures clothed with flocks, the vallies also covered over with corn, and the year crowned with goodness* †. Never did Tyre, Alexandria, or Jerusalem, in their desolations, exhibit such a scene; nor the most cruelly ransacked and plundered kingdom since time began. This also would revive in Noah and his family, the good impressions they had received on the mighty waters, and fix them in their hearts for ever. And the admonitions of this patriarch, who lived three hundred and forty-nine years after the flood, and was the instructor, and, for some time at least, the governor of the new world, would have the greatest weight and authority.

FROM the whole, therefore, it appears, that this was a very just and proper dispensation for the reforming mankind, and restoring religion in the earth, and had the intended effect, by suppressing violence and rapine, which universally prevailed, and hath never since, degenerate as the world has been in subsequent ages, arrived at such a monstrous pitch. And to the remotest generations, the flood is an awful warning to all who, like those who lived before it came, remain deaf to the instructions of repentance

* Heb. x. 31.

† Psalm lxx. 10, 11, 13.

and righteousness. As such it is represented in the holy scriptures, especially by St. Peter, where he says, *And God spared not the old world, but saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly**. It bears also a comparison with *the coming of the son of man †*, when the final destruction of the universe shall be by fire at the last day, *which God hath revealed by Jesus Christ ‡*. Then let us not harden our hearts §, as the ungodly did of old, but believe and prepare! *For behold! he cometh, and every eye shall see him! and they also who pierced him §*.

* 2 Pet. xi, 5. † St. Matthew, xxiv, 37. ‡ St. Matthew, xxiv, 31. § Psal. xciv, 8. § Revel. i, 7.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XIV.

Of NoAH's coming out of the ARK, and offering
SACRIFICE, &c.

GENESIS VIII. IX.

THE rain, as has been said, continued incessantly *forty days*; the waters covered the whole earth *an hundred and fifty days*; and then began to *assuage*, by a wind which God made to dissipate one part of them in vapor, and to drive the rest back into the caverns from whence they had been brought. The original word translated *wind*, signifies also *spirit**, and some interpreters have been of opinion that Moses speaks here of the third person of the blessed Trinity. The ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat: And the waters decreased continually, until the first day of the tenth month, when the tops of the mountains were seen.

* See the first Dissertation, page 6. Consider likewise Colopi-jah.

IT is to be deplored that the enemies of religion seize every opportunity to embarrass it, not only with difficulties in the phraseology, but also with whatever has the appearance of them, in places of the sacred text where there are really none. They have said, that such a building as the ark would require more than fifteen cubits water; that the highest mountains, according to Moses, had not more; that the ark might have rested on *Ararat*, when the waters were at their height; and, therefore, the historian is not to be understood, as giving a token of their *decrease*, when he says that it rested on that mountain. It has also been objected that every large vessel would be broken to pieces by its own weight, if it was to rest on dry land, and must have its lading supported by water.

THESE, and the like objections, one would naturally think, should arise from great skill in the arts, upon which some men fondly pretend to ground them. And yet when the expert are consulted on these matters, such objections are found to be, either the fruit of ignorance, or plausible fancies forced into the service of infidelity.

IT is much less by the burthen of a ship, than by the construction, that we are to judge how much water it will draw. Now, though the figure of Noah's ark, be not circumstantially given in this short description, it evidently appears that it was not designed to sail fast but to float, which is sufficient to prove that it took much less water, than those whom we are now refuting would insinuate. And in regard to a ship breaking, by the weight of its cargo, when it
takes

ground, experience shews the contrary; especially when the winds are not tempestuous; and there is a smooth and sandy bottom, such as we may suppose the mountains of *Ararat* were after the flood. And what would follow if the hulk was bulged?

WHETHER those mountains be the highest on earth, as some geographers and travellers say they are; or whether the ark rested precisely on one of their most elevated summits, is not insisted on: But interpreters have exercised themselves greatly on the question respecting the situation of the mountain itself. Many are the opinions which have been given; and nice criticisms employed to very little purpose. One thing is clear that by the word *Ararat*, frequently occurring in scripture, is meant the country of *Armenia*. In this sense the *Septuagint* * understood it, the author of the *vulgate* †, and several others. A very learned man hath not only proved that *Ararat* and *Armenia* are synonymous, but likewise that the *Gordian* mountain, so called in modern times, is that upon which the ark first touched ground, after the waters had subsided ‡.

A MUCH larger account might be given of this mountain, if it was consistent with the present work: But this being sufficient for ordinary readers, the curious may be farther satisfied by looking into the authors below §.

* Sept. 2 Kings xix, 37. καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐσώθησαν εἰς τὴν Ἀραράδ. in our translation, Armenia.

† Vulg. Gen. viii, 4. Requievitque arca mense septimo, vigesimo septimo die mensis, super montes Armeniæ.

‡ Bochart.

§ La Boulaye, Voyages. Tavernier, Voyages de perse.

IF some unbelievers have vainly attempted to invalidate the testimony of Moses, the *Armenians*, to confirm it, produce evidences, which they have received with too much credulity. On the supposition that it may be credited the ark will never decay, they sell pieces of it at a great price. In Muscovy a black cross is shewn, which is said to be made of the ark, and esteemed a most precious relick *.

TAVERNIER says, the city of *Nakhsuan*, the oldest in the world, is three leagues distant from the mountain *Ararat*; that Noah settled there after he left the ark; and that the word is derived from *Nak*, which signifies *ship*, and *fsuan*, *to stop*. The application is easily seen.

LA BOULAYE says, there is an *Armenian* tradition, that Noah's ark rested on the top of that mountain, but they cannot ascend it; that one of their pilgrims, a man of a most holy life, made the attempt, and reached the middle of it; that falling short of water, he prayed to God, who made a fountain spring to preserve his life; but told him with an audible voice, that none should be so rash as to proceed farther towards the summit of that mountain. Here we have one instance, among many, of the disagreement of historians, who, as too plainly appears, take their accounts, from the accidental acquaintances they form in the several countries through which they pass.

BUT to resume the Mosaic history; two months and some days after the ark had rested, on one of

* Olearius.

mountains of Ararat, the tops of others were discovered. *At the end of forty days more, Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:* probably in the roof of it, a circumstance which would facilitate and extend his view. *And sent forth a raven, which went to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.* This phrase in our translation might be purposely adopted, on account of the equivocality of the Hebrew text, which renders what Moses says, concerning the raven, equally susceptible of another interpretation, than is here given *. The most of commentators, indeed, understand the words, as they are in the margin of our bibles, *going forth and returning*. But the *Septuagint*, on the contrary, and the *vulgate*, render them, *it went, and returned not again, until the waters were dried up from off the earth* †. This variation, among the several editions of the ancient scriptures, inclined a great man to think, for which he raised up many enemies against himself, that the seventy interpreters had other copies of the sacred books, from which they drew their translation, than those of which we are now possessed, and that they were more correct. The subject of the controversy is too trifling, to enter upon a serious discussion of it, in this performance, which is designed for instruction and edification, and *not for doubtful disputations* ‥; nor *strife about words to no profit* §.

* Heb. אֶחָד הָעוֹרֵב וְיָצָא יָצָא וְשׁוּב

† Sep. Καὶ ἐξέβηκεν ὁ ἀράχ, ἐξέψυχε ἵνα; ἕξ ἡμερῶν καὶ οὐκ ἔσπευε ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.
Vulg. Qui (scil. corvus) egrediebatur, & non revertebatur donec siccarentur aquæ super terram.

‡ Louis Capel, Critic. Sacr.

‖ Rom. xiv. i.

§ ii Timi. ii. 14.

NOAH also sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. Here interpreters have again enquired, whether the raven and the dove were sent out at the same time. It is a happy circumstance, that few chronological questions can be less interesting than this. For though matters of the greatest moment depended on the period, many authors would insist on it as absolutely certain. It has been thought the interval was forty days; that it was only seven; that there was no interval at all*. A learned and solid commentator is of opinion, that the tenth verse of the chapter, where we read, *and Noah staid yet other seven days*, relates to seven days preceding, which seem to have passed between the going forth of the raven and the dove †.

SEVEN days after the dove returned, Noah sent her out of the ark again. The second time, she brought in her mouth an olive leaf pluckt off. A weaker argument against the universality of the deluge, than that which has been grounded on this circumstance, can hardly be conceived. The text imports, that the dove had in its mouth an olive branch pluckt off; to which some have been pleased to add, that it was green. This, they say, could no where be found but in such places as the flood had not reached, the leaves every where else being withered and dry. But as is well known, the leaves of the olive continuing for a long time green, under water, this is sufficient to refute such a weak objection, without having recourse to some interpreters, who have advanced that the dove had taken this leaf from the garden of Eden †.

* Heideg. de vit. Patr. Exercit. *passim*,

† Bishop Patrick, in loco. † R. Bibi.

UPON the prince of commentators we are sorry to criticise *. He has said that the word translated *leaf* signifies equally a *branch*; and to obviate the difficulty, how a dove could break off a branch from a tree, he has suggested that it was summer-time, when new shoots out of trees are easily crott. But the learned will see in the Hebrew bible and concordance, that the words for *branch* and *leaf* are very different, and that the latter in this place is plainly expressed.

OTHER *seven days* having elapsed, Noah *sent forth the dove* the third time, *which returned not again unto him any more*: notifying to the patriarch, not only that the tops of the mountains were dry, which he beheld standing up out of the waters, and also the lower grounds, but likewise that there was wanting neither food, nor a nest where she might repose herself, and expect a mate for the propagation of the kind; in short, that the earth was not only drained, but fit to be inhabited, and afforded food for the creatures he had with him.

THE reasons given for the choice of those fowls, in preference to all others, on this occasion, are these; that the *raven*, being a carnivorous animal, would soon discover, by its smell, if any putrid carcases had infected the air, and would not return to the ark if it found any dead bodies to prey upon; and the *dove*, possessing a strong wing, and loving to feed on the ground, and pick up seeds, was a very fit creature to make farther discoveries.

* Bishop Patrick, in loco.

WE must not omit to remark, in the relation of these circumstances, the interval of *seven days*, which seems to have been observed for some particular reason: Perhaps on this day Noah expected a blessing, rather than on any other: Being devoted from the beginning to religious services, he might entertain the hope of receiving good tidings on it. If not a compleat demonstration, this, at least, furnishes a presumption, in favour of those who think the sabbath was celebrated before the giving of the law on *Sinai* *.

THOUGH Noah knew that the waters of the flood were withdrawn, it was not till the end of fifty days after he had sent out the dove the last time, that he made his debarkation. Perhaps he thought that time necessary for drying the earth compleatly, or rather, as he had entered into the ark at a precise time, by the special command of God, he might wait for the same command to leave it. This conjecture Moses seems to encourage, when he says, at the expiration of that time, *God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of catile, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the ground; that that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.*

THE good patriarch entered on the possession of the restored world with a solemn act of divine worship, in testimony of his thankfulness for his preservation, and that of his family, and in obedience, it

* See Dissertation v. page 72.

is probable to some previous command. If ever a sense of gratitude and fear, could produce a sincere homage, it might certainly be expected on this occasion. Could Noah render any other to God, amidst so many objects, which, at once, presented in so lively a manner, both his resentment and his mercy? The patriarch was surrounded, on the one hand, with the dead bodies of his own species, and the wrecks of a ruinous world; and, on the other, he saw himself, with his family about him, who would naturally have been involved in the universal desolation, and could not have been preserved, but by the concurrence of multiplied and continued miracles. *He, accordingly, builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.* That is to say, he sacrificed all those kinds of animals, which Moses calls *clean*, even before the publication of *his law* *.

Of the acceptableness of this act of devotion, there is a signification in the verse following, in figurative or hieroglyphical language: *And the Lord smelled a sweet savour.* Bodily sensations, and external representations, were, in the first ages of the world, and are at this day, where men are entirely in a state of nature, employed to express abstract notions, or the first and most genuine sentiments of the mind. In like manner the divine approbation, or the pleasure the Almighty took, in the exercise of Noah's piety, is set forth by an odour, or fragrance grateful to the smell; in other words, the relish of the body, is transferred to the relish and taste of the mind. This

* See the foregoing Dissertation.

mode of speech is very frequent in the levitical law, where it is often said, *when any one will offer a meat-offering unto the Lord, he shall bring it to the priests, who shall burn it on the altar, with frankincense, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour, unto the Lord* *. A desire is, hereby, required in the worshipper, of purity and grace, and that his sacrifice might be accepted. Hence David says, *O Lord, let my prayer come before thee like incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice* †: Or, let it be well pleasing, and approved of; as sincere prayer always is. In the same sense the death of Christ is applied; *he loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour* ‡.

No ground is here laid, for the most unjust of all accusations against this lawgiver, that he thought the divinity was corporeal. Moses has taken so much care, when he uses such expressions, to purge them of gross ideas, that we cannot, without the greatest injustice, suspect him of ignorance on this subject.

THE expression, however, ill understood, that *God smelled*, may have given occasion to the notions which the heathens have formed of their Gods. Among them it was an opinion, that the Gods were pleased with basking in the smoke of the incense which was offered to them in sacrifice. Many of them, it is true, entertained nobler ideas: *The Gods*, says one, *have no need either of perfumes, or statues; they regard only a willing and pure mind to serve them; and their meat is the doctrine of truth* §: Words not only wor-

* Levit. i. 9. † Psal. cxli, 2. ‡ Ephes. v, 2. § Dion. Chrys.

thy of a pagan orator, but of the christian divine of the same surname; nay, even of one of the prophets themselves. Another asserts, that *there is no wise man who would wish to have it believed, that he could be gained by mere exhalations and vapors* *. But philosophers of the first rank have not been followed by the crowd of their countrymen. The bodies of the Gods, it has been alledged, are nourished by certain perfumations †. And a celebrated wit, to turn this opinion into ridicule, has said, that *the gods left their ORDINARY of nectar and ambrosia, to taste the fumes and the fat of sacrifices*. ‡.

THE God whom we know, being a pure spirit, can relish, or be pleased with nothing, but what is spiritually good, the love and obedience of the soul. This is the only *smell* that is grateful to him.—The sacrifice of our Redeemer, which is said to be a sweet savour, was his exhibition of submiffion, and actual obedience to the will and law of God; and the sacrifices of Noah, and of the other patriarchs, and of the chosen people, were signs of the inward moral dispositions of their hearts. A clean beast, or a clean fowl, brought to an altar, figuratively represented what the sacrificer himself was, or wanted to be;—and our Lord, in the highest and most perfect degree, really was, and perfectly did, what *the offering up of himself* represented—spotless, acceptable, and efficacious.

To proceed: On the solemn occasion of Noah's sacrifice, and in consequence of its sweet smelling savour, *the Lord said in his heart*—in language more

* Jamblichus. † Baron de Spanheim. ‡ Lucian de Sacrif.

fuitable to his nature, he determined, resolved, or rather then declared his purpose, that he would *not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.* The sense and instruction of which words seem to be, that the Almighty would change his measures with men, so that they should have larger degrees of grace from him, both in regard to improvements and punishments; and seeing they were so inclined to wickedness, from the long and deep corruption of their natures and ways, which is the meaning of an *evil imagination from their youth*, God would not at least *smite other living creatures, as he had done*, with a flood, for man's sake; nor change the natural course of the world to scourge the sinners that dwell therein: *For, said God, while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.* This intimates that seed-time and harvest, and summer and winter had entirely ceased, without any distinction, at the time of the deluge; and so it is likely had day and night in a great measure also; and, therefore, made this part of the covenant, established with Noah, and with his seed after him, the more important.

BESIDES this, the Lord was also pleased to repeat to Noah and his sons the same blessing on the propagation of the human species, and the marks of dignity upon our natures, as he had given our first parents at their creation. A comparison of the blessings given to them *both* will evidently prove this to have been the case. To Adam and Eve God said, *Be fruitful, and*

*and multiply, and replenish the earth**: To Noah and his sons, he says, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*: To our first parents it was said, *Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth†*: To Noah and his sons it is said, *The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.*

THERE was likewise added, a grant of animal food; which seems clearly to settle the point that the use of it was not permitted before the deluge; though, by several learned men, this point is still contested. What they advance, however, when carefully collected and weighed, appears too weak to induce conviction against the received opinion, that the antediluvians did not eat flesh. Here the former comparison again takes place: To Adam and Eve was granted for food, *every herb bearing seed, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed‡*: To Noah and his sons, the charter is enlarged, *every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb, have I given you all things*. The only restriction in this new privilege was, that men should not eat the flesh of an animal in the life, that is, in the blood thereof: Nor, consequently, should they eat any flesh cut off from any animal while it was alive; to prevent, we may well suppose, the inhuman maiming of cattle, and the putting any living creature to unnecessary pain and torture; as the practice can never fail of producing

* Genesis, i, 28.

† Ibid.

‡ Genesis, i, 29.

many other pieces of cruelty and wickedness, even in social life.

IN regard to the earth, the blessing upon it at the creation was, *Let the earth bring forth grass, and herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself up on the earth**: After the flood it is, *while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest shall not cease. In the beginning, the lights in the firmament were appointed to divide the day from the night; and so be for seasons, and for days and years †*: The new blessing is, *cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

FROM these circumstances thus laid together, it has been ingeniously concluded ‡, that the old curse, denounced against the earth at the fall §, was finished and compleated at the deluge. When the whole race of men, eight only excepted, were destroyed, the serpent having sufficiently bruised the heel of the woman's seed, the time came to relieve the world, with respect to this part of the curse so fully executed; and, therefore, a blessing was *once more* pronounced upon the earth; and a covenant of temporal prosperity confirmed to Noah, and by him to all mankind; making good the prophecy of his father at the time of his birth, *This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed §.*

OBJECTIONS to this theory have been raised in great abundance, particularly to this application of the

* Genesis, i, 2. † Genesis, i, 14. ‡ Dr. Sherlock, Disc.
iv. on Prophecy. § Genesis, iii, 17, 18. § Genesis, v, 29.

words last quoted. It has been said, that when Lamech called his son's name Noah, which signifies *Rest*, he designed no more than to declare he should be an *husbandman*; and find out the use of wine. To this it has been answered, that though we are told, *Noah began to be an husbandman, and planted a vineyard*, he cannot yet, in reason, be supposed to have been the first *husbandman*, nor the first that invented wine; seeing his birth was one thousand and fifty-six years after the creation; and the earth was all that time offering its productions for supplies to men's necessity, who would not fail to improve their advantages as wants pressed upon them. And even supposing Noah was the first inventor of wine, how, it has been asked, does that invention take off the curse from the earth? or bring much consolation to mankind, under the labours of life? when only a very small number of those who toil in tilling the ground, are any way benefited by that discovery. The only rational interpretation of Lamech's speech on the birth of Noah is, therefore, thought to be this, that he, being a prophet, foresaw that God would, in his son's time, and out of a particular regard to his righteousness, remove the curse from the earth; and bestow all those blessings upon him, and his race, of which the world had been deprived since the fall*.

WHILE some have insisted, on the one hand, that the flood, by its effects, must necessarily have injured the fertility of the earth, and that the fruits of it could not be so nutritive as they had been, before the salt water of the sea had spoiled the soil; it has been ar-

* Revel. exam. Dissert. xi, p. 134.

gued by many, on the other hand, that, on the footing of the clearest hypothesis, the curse must have been taken off the earth, by the very nature of the flood itself. It is evident, say they, that this effect must have been necessarily produced, at that time, by the rich saturation of the earth with rain and salts, together with the constant supply of moisture from the clouds ever since. To these they also add, the infinite shoals of fish, all the carcases of animals, and the immense treasures of shells and marle that were opened up, and spread on the ground by the waters, which must have left a vast fund of fatness, on the heights, to be gradually washed down thence upon the lower lands, by every shower from heaven.

If this doctrine be admitted as probable or certain, the opinion of those must fall to the ground, who assert that it was in consequence of the injury done to the earth, by the universal desolation, and of its incapacity to produce as much nourishment as it did before, that the grant of animal food was made to man for his more comfortable subsistence. We must rather search for the reason of this indulgence in the wisdom and bounty of the great creator and Lord of all.

THIS gracious covenant being settled, as to all these articles, a sign or token of it was given, on the part of God, to insure its unchangeableness and perpetuity. *This is the token of the covenant, which I make between me and thee, and every living creature, for everlasting generations: I do set my BOW in the cloud; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the*
covenant

covenant which I have established between me and all flesh. This is the manner of all the divine dispensations: Whenever any special manifestation from heaven has taken place, there has been always some memorial, or seal of ratification, annexed to it. Circumcision was a mark of the covenant made with Abraham; the passover commemorated deliverance from the Egyptian servitude; both serving as sacraments, or signs, of the *Jewish* covenant, as baptism and the Lord's supper do of the *Christian*; and the rain-bow was a token of the promise, *that the waters should no more become a flood to destroy all flesh, that was upon the earth.*

I DO set my BOW in the cloud, *that I may remember the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh,* is one of those expressions which may be easily qualified, by the notions which Moses gives us of the divinity, in other places of his writings. God stood in no need of this bow to be his remembrancer of the covenant, and, therefore, intended that its establishment in the cloud should serve to strengthen Noah's faith, and that of his descendants in all future ages.

It has given great displeasure to some, that the imagination, there was never any rain-bow at all before the flood, should ever have been entertained. They say it is a mistake grounded on the grossest inattention; that the suppression of this phænomenon could not have been effected, without repeated miracles, and the constant interposition of the Almighty; seeing the rain-bow necessarily arises out of sun-shine

R

and

and rain at the same time, and must be seen by every spectator standing between the two objects, with his face turned towards the rain, and at such a distance, as to let the sun's reflected rays fall upon his eye, from an innumerable quantity of small globular drops of falling water; which we cannot but suppose happened before the flood, and would, of course, form the rain-bow, the nature of which they thus more minutely describe:

THE distinction of rain-bows is, the *interior* and *exterior*. The first is produced by the rays of the sun, falling on an infinite number of drops of water, undergoing there two refractions, and a reflection between two, and from thence returning, coloured, to our eyes. The other is caused by the rays of the same orb, terminating on a vast collection of like drops, undergoing there two refractions and two reflections between two, and in the same manner returning to our eyes, coloured, as before. Of these facts, demonstrations have been given, by very simple experiments, especially by a torch, in a very dark night, and a watering-can, directly opposite, and at a certain distance, discharging a great quantity of water through its various perforations. The light of the former, opposed to the latter, passes through two reflections, and two refractions, and forms the exact appearance of the rain-bow.

HENCE, their conclusion is, that the rain-bow, a thing already in nature, was chosen for a sign, a token or memorial of the covenant, which was then made

DISSERTATION XIV. 243

made between God and Noah; in the same manner as the Sabbath was declared to be the sign, or memorial of the covenant made between him and the sons of Jacob, on their deliverance from their bondage, though it had been appointed to be kept holy at the creation of the world, and in remembrance of that great work *..

THIS is the full force and extent of the argument; but as it hath nothing to support it in scripture, it's solidity may be justly suspected. The opinion of an eminent divine is, that the first curse was, in a great measure, executed by with-holding rain from the earth, during the whole period before the flood, or a considerable part of it, as well it might be, if the Almighty pleased †. In that case there could be no such phenomenon, as has been represented. But admitting the existence of rain during that period, grounds in nature may still be enquired for, to support the foregoing reasoning; unless we assert the palpable untruth, that every disposition of the air, or every *garment*, or texture, of a cloud is adapted to produce a rain-bow. If other natural causes, with their motions and operations, depend upon the final, as the divine philosophy teaches us, they who acknowledge the scripture, have no room to think that either the clouds or the air had that peculiar quality and arrangement before the flood, which is requisite to the production of the rain-bow, and they now have; seeing this wonderful effect had no such use or

* M. Saurin, Disc. ix. p. 128.

† Revel. exam. Dissert. xi. p. 135.

end then, as it hath had ever since. Having been appointed by God, to be a witness of his covenant with the new world; a messenger to secure mankind from destruction by deluges; if it had appeared before the flood, the sight of it after would have been but a slender comfort to Noah and his trembling posterity; whose fear, lest the like inundation might happen again, was by much, too great to be removed by any common or usual sign. The ancient poets represented Isis as the daughter of wonder, and sent by Jupiter's peremptory command to Neptune, not to swell the waters, we may suppose, to annoy the world.

THE *bow shall be seen in the cloud*; not always, but often enough to remind men of the promise, and excite their belief of it, that the earth shall not be drowned again, though the clouds should have thickened as if they threatened it. It is very remarkable that the rain-bow is a natural sign that the clouds are beginning to disperse, and there will not be much rain after its appearance. For it is never formed in a thick, but in a thin, and almost pellucid cloud; so that glowing after showers, which come from thick embodied clouds, it is a token that they are almost exhausted. It is a token also that the great and good God of nature will never thicken them to such a degree again, as to bring an universal flood upon the earth. Perhaps too, we may see in the mixed colours of the rain-bow, *the destruction of the old world by water, and the future consumption of the present by fire*, whose flaming brightness prevails in the watery mass*.

* Bishop Patrick, in Loco.

WE ought, therefore, to incline to their side, who are of opinion, that there was no rain-bow before the flood, and that it is purely the effect of divine power on the disposition of the elements, to serve as the most striking signal, and everlasting memorial of the covenant God made with Noah, and all the succeeding generations of mankind. In this light its admirable form and composition force us to view it : *Look upon the rain-bow, and praise him that made it, very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof. It compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the most high hath bended it **.

AFTER this magnificent object, another point strikes us a few verses downward ; *and surely your blood of your lives will I require ; at the hand of every beast will I require it ; and at the hand of every man, at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* That is to say, the beast that killeth a man shall be put to death ; which is observed as a law, in these realms, to this day, in obedience to the *Noahic* statute, where ravenous beasts, brought from foreign parts, are first offered to the *King*, and, when refused, are put to death by the magistrate : And, in like manner, every human murderer, is put to death *by man* ; a particular term in scripture for the judge, or civil officer. Here then courts of trial are divinely authorized ; not only for the punishment of murder, but likewise, by parity of reason, of any other great offences, that may affect life, its posses-

* *Eccclus. Chap. xliiii. ver. 11, 12.*

ons, and enjoyments. And let those who are concerned, in raising rebellious against such a power, seriously consider if they be consulting the welfare of the state, whatever may be the limits and the claims of its jurisdiction, so long as the ends of religious and political government are pursued.

HERE we have a rude draught of the institution of magistracy, of which, hitherto, we have not seen the smallest traces or intimations in the sacred history. On the contrary, it appears from the case of Cain, who was certainly a murderer, and of Lamech, in whose family there were the greatest disorders, that the most heinous of all crimes were left to be punished, as God, in his providence, should see fit.

Now, if murder, before the flood, was thus plainly exempted from punishment, judicially, much more would lesser instances of injury be, such as, probably, Lamech's was. And one of the reasons of this, no doubt, was, that there were no distinct states, nor regular governments among the antediluvians; who, spreading over the face of the earth, and removing farther from the place of public worship, had lost a sense of God, and lived in a disorderly manner, exercising rapine and outrage, as far as they had power, and were instigated by lust, avarice, and revenge, *till the whole earth was filled with violence*. An image, very instructive of distant provinces, which merely through their elongation from the mother country, attempt a revolt, and make a pretence of liberty a cloak

cloak for all the licentiousness of which they are pleased to be guilty.

SUCH enormities and confusions, we cannot but be sensible, could not have passed unpunished under laws, and rulers, armed with power and authority. But without them, the old world must necessarily have been, as all States without policy are, and that of the Israelites is represented, *when there was no King in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes* *. The possibility of such a state we can conceive, and the shocking disorders that attend it.

If it should be a question, what design the Almighty could propose, in leaving mankind, for some time after the world began, in this state of disunion and injustice; the answer may very freely be given, that it certainly was not to lead them into wickedness; but teach them, by experience, the necessity of laws and governors; and the reasonableness of submitting to them. Though even the contrary supposition, that magistracy, in some form or another, was instituted at the beginning, should be admitted; yet the licentiousness of the times had universally shaken off the yoke, and in no instance been obedient to it. And, therefore, the reason, that God did permanently establish it, after the flood, seems to be, that men would bear its restraint, when its utility and importance had fully demonstrated the want of it.

NOTHING more remains for remarks, within the compass of these chapters, except Noah's curse pro-

* See the book of Judges.

nounced upon Canaan, the son of Ham, who, in violation of all filial reverence and duty, had sported with his aged grand-father's folly and wretchedness. Whether Noah had invented wine or not, which is purely problematical, it is certain, that either through ignorance of its strength, or the infirmities of old age, he was *drunken* with it, *and uncovered within his tent*. And, from the circumstances of the story, it is more probable that Canaan saw him first, than his father Ham; who, nevertheless, instead of reproving his son for his levity, *told his two brothers without*. They, namely, Shem and Japhet, obviated farther disgrace. Upon which *Noah awoke from his wine, and knowing what his younger, or little son, or Canaan his grandson, had done unto him*, and his father had encouraged and propagated, *he said, cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren*. The expression is not to be considered as a malevolent wish, or imprecation, but simply as a prediction of the future abject condition of Ham's posterity; much less is it to be understood as affecting any thing but their temporal and outward circumstances; as appears from the whole of Noah's discourse; who, being divinely inspired, declared the Almighty's counsels; either in regard to the slaughter of the *thirty* kings, and most of the inhabitants of the land which bore Canaan's name, by the Israelites descended from Shem, whose *God and Lord Noah blessed*; or in regard to the Egyptians, the race of that impious patriarch, who have literally been *servants of servants* for upwards of two thousand years: Not to mention the colour to which most of the Africans have been condemned either through this curse, or the effects of the climate they have

have been obliged to undergo. The lightest of these tokens of the divine displeasure, may be a sufficient warning against all undutifulness in children towards their parents, for ever.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XV.

Of the Tower of Babel ; and Confusion of Tongues.

GENESIS XI.

THE waters of the deluge had made such an impression upon the minds of Noah and his posterity, that they confined themselves to the highest places, and the least accessible to inundations. The mountains of Armenia, where the ark rested, and their environs, continued to be their residence. But about two hundred years after, when their fears were dissipated, they descended into the vallies, and the low countries, and took possession of the plains of Chaldea, or Babylonia. Moses says, *as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.* Now Shinar is Chaldea; where Babylon, according to the Septuagint, stood*. It is expressly said that the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel, in the land

* Zech. v. 11. Sept. Ὀικοδομησάτωσαν αὐτὴν οἰκίαν ἐν γῇ Βαβυλωνῶν.
Heb. עֲנִינָהּ

of Shinar*. And Daniel relates, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and carried part of the vessels of the house of God, into the land of Shinar†. Shinar then is the country in which the city of Babylon was built, or, as is said, all those western territories which lie between the Tigris and the mountains of Armenia‡.

THE objections made to this account are; that the journeying of mankind from the place where the ark rested, to Shinaar, is said to be from the East; but a journey from the Gordian Hills to Shinaar, would be from the North; and that Xisuthrus, as the Chaldæans pronounce the word, or Fohi, according to the Chinese, was Noah; it must be more probable, that the first population, after the flood, was from the mountains near Bactria, which lie between Persia and the present dominions of the Great Mogul. To which the answers are; that Moses describes the situation of countries, from Arabia where he wrote; and the journey from Bactria to Shinaar is about 1200 miles, which it is not likely emigrants would travel, who might settle in better territories, nearer home.

TILL this descent, from whatever place it was, the whole inhabitants of the earth were, undoubtedly, united in one compact body. For though in the chapter going before, Moses represents the posterity of Japheth as overspreading and possessing *the isles of the Gentiles*, that is, of Greece and Asia which lie in the Archipelago; the sons of Ham as going down

* Gen. x, 10. † Daniel, i, 1, 2. ‡ Bocharti Phaleg. L. 1, Cap. v.

into Egypt, and the countries around, known to this day, in the learned languages, by several of their names; and the issue of Shem as occupying the East, or the lands of Mesopotamia and Padan-aram, the native soils, in future ages, of the renowned patriarchs; and says that *by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood*; the whole of this account is to be understood of the genealogy of the nations after the dispersion, of which we are now to treat, as appears undeniably from the words that follow, *every one after their tongues, and after their families*; for till this journey from the East, into the plain in the land of Shinar, the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. This circumstance was necessary; seeing Noah and his sons, had but one language at the flood, and were alive when this dispersion of mankind over the face of the earth happened. And, indeed, how a diversity of tongues could, in so short a time after, take place, is not easily to be conceived.

THIS very difficulty occurring to Moses, that the remotest generations might be acquainted with the circumstances of so important an event, he inserts the section in this chapter from the beginning to the tenth verse, where he gives a full and satisfactory relation of the matter, with the causes and consequences of it.

HE informs us that the whole earth thus embodied, so to speak, and using one language, moving together, we may suppose, by a general public act, or mutual consent travelled towards the West, and finding a spacious fruitful plain in the land of Shinar, determined to settle there, and to build a city and a tower

tower, *reaching unto heaven*. The materials, he tells us, were *brick and mortar*. Of the exact dimensions of the tower, notwithstanding the disquisitions of learned men for their own amusement, the holy scripture says nothing. The greatest extravagance of thought has been indulged on this subject. With regard to the city itself, built by the sons of Noah, oriental authors say, that it was three hundred and thirteen fathoms in length, and one hundred and fifty one in breadth; that the walls of it were five thousand five hundred and thirty three fathoms high, and thirty three broad; and the tower ten thousand fathoms, or twelve miles high; dimensions the most disproportionate to each other, and the most needless that can be conceived. By the testimony of eye-witnesses, who examined the remains of the tower carefully, our belief is solicited that it was four miles high; but this not being sufficient to excite our wonder, a certain writer raises the height to no less than five thousand miles: Shameful extravagancies indeed. The only account we can depend upon, as to the dimensions of this tower, supposing it to be the same with that which stood in the midst of the temple of Belus, afterwards built round it by Nebuchadnezzar, must be taken from profane authors. Herodotus says, it was a furlong in length, and as much in breadth; and Strabo determines the height to have been a furlong, or the eighth part of a mile, or six hundred and sixty foot, which is itself prodigious; as thereby it appears to have exceeded the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids in height one hundred seventy nine foot, though it fell short of it at the base by thirty three. It consisted of eight square towers one above another, gradually decreasing in breadth; which,

which, with the winding of the stairs from the top to the bottom on the outside, gave it the resemblance of a pyramid. This antique form, joined to the extraordinary height of the structure, easily induces us to believe it to be the same tower mentioned by Moses; the forementioned monarch of Babylon finishing the design, which the sons of Noah were obliged, by the confusion of tongues, to leave unexecuted.

THE ruins of this celebrated antiquity are now so defaced, that the people of that very country are not certain of their situation; and this has occasioned travellers to differ concerning it. Most of them, however, led by a tradition of the inhabitants, have judged a place about eight or nine miles to the west, or north-west of Baghdad, a city well known, to be the tower of Babel; where there is a building conspicuous at a vast distance, standing by itself in a wide plain between the Euphrates and Tigris, of sun-burnt bricks, each a foot square and six inches thick as some say; though there are great variations on this circumstance; as also on the manner in which those bricks are ranged*.

WE may here, by way of apology for *ancient* oriental tales, observe, that in old times there seems to have been the profoundest ignorance of true philosophy, which teaches us that the air, necessary to life, extends to no great distance above the surface of our globe, and falls infinitely short of some of the extravagant altitudes ascribed to that famous tower. Even Moses himself, David, and other writers of the old

* Univ. Hist. Vol. 4, P. 322, text and notes.

testament,

testament, appear to have been in the same situation, in regard to the rain that fell from the clouds, concerning which, as it was invisibly prepared, they constantly speak, as if it was distilled from reservoirs, or fountains of water, treasured up above *. Nor is this any imperfection in the holy writings, which were never designed to instruct us in much more than what is intimately connected with our present duty and eternal welfare.

The top of the tower having been designed to reach up to heaven, is an expression plainly hyperbolical, and signifies no more than that the builders intended it should be a great height; as appears from many other passages of scripture, particularly from what is said of the cities of the *Anakims*, that *they were great and fenced up to heaven*; † and of the *waves of the sea, that they mount up to heaven* ‡, that is, rise and swell, by the violence of the tempest, till they mix, as it were, with the clouds, though their real elevation is very considerable.

THE intention of the builders was to make themselves a name, and to prevent their being scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth. The Hebrew word, here translated a name, may signify, figuratively, eminence and distinction; whence some have imagined, that the tower was designed as a mark, or sign, exposed to view, by which the inhabitants of the city were to direct themselves, by keeping it in sight when they were at a distance, lest they should wander away into uncultivated lands, from their own habitations. But

* Gen. i. Psalm cxlviii. † Deut. ix. 1. ‡ Ps. cvii. 26.

this is a childish conceit, as it is extremely easy for men, who have travelled any road a few times before, to resume and know it with great certainty again, without any such distant marks to assist them. It is, therefore, much more reasonable to suppose, that by *a name* *, the leaders of that people, of whom Nimrod was the chief, meant the same thing, that the word signifies in the other places of scripture †, a monument or token of superiority, to all succeeding generations, that they were the true original governors, to whom mankind owed subjection; and that other captains, who, it might be foreseen, should start up, and break the body, by erecting separate communities, were rebels and invaders. In short, that great building, and city about it, seems to have been a piece of state-policy, to keep the world together, perhaps under one head, at least under the successors of the present chiefs; and, by its strength, calculated to repulse bodies of foreigners that might attempt to break in upon them ‡.

To defeat their design, we are told *the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded: And said, behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: And now nothing will be restrained from them which they have ima-*

* Heb. כח † 2 Sam. vii. 23. viii. 13. 1 Kings v. 3.

‡ The Vulgate gives the fourth verse of the chapter a turn, which strongly favours the opinion, that the builders of Babel fell on that project, when they had reason, we know not from what cause, to apprehend that they would be scattered abroad: *Et dixerunt: Venite, faciamus nobis civitatem et turrim, cujus culmen pertingat ad cælum: et celebremus nomen nostrum ANTE-QUAM dividamur in universas terras.* Vide Vulg. Edit.

gined to do: Go to then, let us go down, and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. This representation of the Almighty, however true in the purpose and consequence of it, is, nevertheless, to be understood by way of accommodation to our conceptions; it teaches us that, by the effects, God made it appear, that he observed their motions, and knew their intentions. A manner of speaking very common, and in our present embodied state absolutely necessary, to describe the divine actions. And perhaps with reference to a mysterious doctrine, not to be expunged, Jehovah is introduced saying, *let us go down and confound their language*; though of the divine substance, and the influence of an invisible agency on human actions, no account is given; nor could it be comprehended by us.

Of this council of God, mentioned on a variety of occasions by the sacred writers, it is our unquestionable duty to make the most devout and respectful use, till *that which is in part is done away, and that which is perfect is come*; when *we shall no more see as through a glass darkly, but face to face*. *

WHEN the project of the foolish builders was frustrated, into how many branches their language was divided, it is vain for us to enquire. The Greek fathers make the tongues formed at Babel, *seventy-two* †;

* 1. Cor. xiii. 12.
Alexand. Strom. L. i. p. 338.

† δύο καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα. Clemen.

and the Latin fathers have followed them*. *Therefore is the name of the place called Babel, or Confusion, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and they were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, and left off to build the city.* The colonies, or nations, established upon this dispersion, are said to have been the same in number, with the dialects that were immediately spoken †.

CONCERNING the first language there have been many enquiries and disputes. St. Augustine, quoted below, in the eleventh chapter, of the sixteenth book of his City of God, determines in favour of the Hebrew; and, by very ingenious arguments, makes his conclusion appear reasonable. Stript of all additions, which it hath received in successive ages, and had even in the days of Moses, it bears undeniably evident marks of a very ancient language. And yet, whatever the number of languages might be after the confusion, many of them, for some time, could not differ much from one another. For Abraham, an Hebrew, lived amongst the Chaldeans, travelled amongst the Canaanites, sojourned with the Philistines, and lived some time in Egypt, during which peregrinations we do not find that he had any remarkable difficulty in conversing with them. Indeed after the stability of speech was lost, and language varied in time from itself, the tongues of different nations would, in a few ages, become vastly different, and unintelligible to one another. Thus, in the time of Joseph,

* Ex illis igitur tribus hominibus Noë filii septuaginta duæ linguæ.

† Totidemque gentes, quæ insulas impleverunt. St. Aug. De Civ. Dei. L. xvi. p. 986.

when

when his brethren came to buy corn in Egypt, the Hebrew and Egyptian tongues were so unlike, that they used an interpreter in their conversation. Though many ancient languages, spoken by nations very remote from one another, retain striking similarities to each other, to this very day.

ANOTHER explanation has been given of this wonderful event. It has been imagined more natural and reasonable to conceive, that the confusion of tongues arose at first from small beginnings, increased gradually, for many years, when the three families of the sons of Shem, of Ham, and of Japhet lived together; and in time grew to such an height, as to scatter mankind, of course, over the face of the earth. And the advice of the poet to the writers of his time, is given by this author to the readers even of the inspired books, *never to let a God interfere, unless a difficulty worthy a god's unravelling should happen**. But this thought seems not altogether to coincide with the Mosaic relation; and when the inspired writer, in very pompous language, makes God interfere, we may safely believe that he did, and performed a miracle worthy of his wisdom.

THE learned judge, mentioned in a foregoing dissertation, calls this confusion of languages, a dismal catastrophe, and terrible convulsion. Here his Lordship is orthodox for once. But after a brief description of it in the words of Moses, what immediately follows? *By confounding the language of men, and scattering them abroad upon the face of all the earth, they were*

rendered savages. And without an immediate change of constitution, the builders of Babel could not possibly have subsisted in the burning region of Guinea, nor in the frozen region of Lapland. But who ever imagined that those dispersing communities, marched directly to the extremities of our continent? Elegant words have no weight in an argument, and impossibilities are incredible. It must have required ages to transport them so far, in which time, it is well known, the constitution of the body would be sufficiently fitted for the climate where they ultimately settled. The reason his Lordship gives, that mankind were thrown into a savage state by the confusion of tongues, is, that if it had not been so, the colonies planted in America, the South Sea islands, and the Terra Australis Incognita, must have been highly polished; because being at the greatest distance, they probably were the latest. And yet these and other remote people, the Mexicans and Peruvians excepted, remain to this day in the original savage state of hunting and fishing*. But will not his Lordship acknowledge; nay he does acknowledge, when he says, in the very same sketch, men never desert their connections nor their country without necessity, that it is always the poorest and most necessitous, and, therefore, in general, the most illiterate, that leave their native soils; consequently, that an estimate made of the perfection of the arts and sciences, by the original colonies of mankind, and always preserved, in a great measure, among them, from the condition of remote nations, must be as unfair, as to infer that England and the other kingdoms of Europe were in a savage state, when the vast swarms of ignorant American adventurers left them.

* Lord Kaimes's Sketches of the History of Man. Sketch 1. passim.

WE shall now proceed to assign some reasons for such a singular interposition of providence. In the case of the building of Babel, and keeping mankind all together, we cannot but see how worthy it was of God, and necessary for the ends of his wisdom and goodness, to prevent the mischievous effects of the design. By this scheme of the builders a great part of the earth must, for a long time, have been uninhabited, uncultivated and over-run with briars and thorns, with woods and thickets, and wild beasts, which, according to ancient authors, did actually infest all neglected countries, and exercised the industry and valor of the primitive heroes to subdue, especially the latter. It was killing wild beasts, which early troubled the earth, and annoyed mankind, that gained Nimrod superiority and immortal renown in Asia, in the same manner as Hercules afterwards in Europe. *Nimrod, says Moses, was a mighty hunter before the Lord,* which Hebraism signifies the greatest and most eminent *hunter* that then was. Besides,

THE bad effects which this project would have had upon the minds of men, and their morals and religion, was, probably, another reason, and the chief, why the Almighty strangely interposed to crush it as soon as it was formed. It would have enslaved, oppressed, and rendered wretched all mankind, except one, or a few, who exercised the tyranny over them. As to morals, though under any constitution, it cannot be denied, men may grow very wicked, and have been seen to do so under the best; yet it is absolutely certain, that tyranny and despotic power is the readiest and surest way, to deprive men of the use of understanding and conscience; which opens a course for vice, superstition

perdition and idolatry, especially under violent and atheistical governors. Had the world, therefore, continued long in one body, under the uncontrouled dominion of such, mankind must have fallen into the deepest corruptions, and the basest servility, and stocked the earth again with a profane, and, at the same time, with a mean spirited race of mortals.

BUT when the design of the city and tower was baffled, by such a confusion of tongues, that the *men could not understand one another's speech*, they were necessarily scattered abroad, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, and, in succession of time, through all the nations of the earth. Thus the contagion of wickedness had, for some generations at least, new barriers placed against it; evil example was confined, and could not well stretch it's influence beyond the limits of one country, before commerce was established; nor could wicked designs be any longer carried on with universal consent, by a multitude of little colonies, separated by the natural boundaries of mountains, rivers, deserts, seas, and whose intercourse was farther impeded every age by a variety of languages, growing still more unintelligible to strangers.

THUS did the wise and mighty ruler of the world oppose his scheme of providence to the folly and weakness of men, still dealing with them like reasonable creatures. It is probable, that when the confusion of tongues, and the division and removal of mankind into distant countries took place, their several destinations were fixed by God, and signified to them, at his command, by the mouth of Noah, who was still alive, or of some other holy man among them, to prevent

vent strife, and, perhaps, as was most suitable to their genius and dispositions. That this was really the case, some have thought very clear from the words of Moses* to the Israelites, to excite them to religious gratitude and service; *Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: Ask thy father, and he will shew thee, thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the most high divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.* Others have thought that these words refer only to the subsequent distribution of Canaan; though the best commentators apply them to the division of the earth among the sons of Noah.

A MATTER quite opposite to that near the close of the foregoing dissertation, shall also bring us to the end of this. As one great cause of profaness in the earth before the flood, seems to have been the want of magistracy, so here again, after that period, we see men soon falling into the other extreme, and nearly as pernicious to virtue and human happiness. We see a few assuming, and the many tamely submitting to, an arbitrary jurisdiction, not only in the punishment of crimes, but likewise, we may well suppose, over men's persons and wills, and all that they had; inso-much that a divine interposition was necessary to disappoint and frustrate it. Hence, if we may be permitted to judge, a regular government, *for a terror to evil-doers, and for encouraging and rewarding those who do well*, must be the happy medium between anarchy and licentiousness on the one hand, and despotism and

* Deut. xxii. 7.

slavery on the other. This, every state so formed, and supported, demonstrates; and, therefore, by all true friends of society, while despotism and slavery are to be hated and opposed, anarchy and licentiousness should never be abetted; but the dignity and authority of law and order regarded as inviolable. *Righteous powers are ordained of God: And whoever resisteth this ordinance, shall receive to themselves damnation*.*

• Rom. xiii. •

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XVI.

Of the first Colonies, or Nations, after the Flood.

GENESIS X. XI.

THE labours of the good Lord Bishop of *Bath and Wells*, of the learned Bishop of *Ely*, and of the critical *Mr. Pool*, on this subject, deserve the largest panegyric; and the commentaries of *M. Le Clerc*, and *Corn. a Lapide*, are far from being without use; and yet neither they, nor the rest of the celebrated writers, in the same tract, appear to have turned their attention sufficiently, to the difficulty arising from the genealogical lists contained in these two chapters. This difficulty results, chiefly, from the order in which the chapters are arraigned; the first being placed before the dispersion of mankind from the plain of Shinar, and in the next the descent of families added to the relation of that extraordinary occurrence.

INDEED it has been said, not without the shew of truth, that curiosity in this matter is needless and frivolous. But it ought to have been remembered, that,

that, without the knowledge of those descents from the sons of Noah, the fulfilment of the prophetic predictions and blessings concerning them could not be traced. How, for instance, could we know whether Japhet dwelt in the tents of Shem, or Canaan was a servant of servants *, what were the ships of Chittim †, or who Gog was ‡, if we remained ignorant where they were placed?

Now the solution of the difficulty seems to be this, that Moses in the tenth chapter, meant to describe the general diffusion of mankind over the earth, after they were scattered abroad, and, in the eleventh, to return again to the race of Shem, from whom he deduces the Hebrews. And this, by the way, may convince those who have indulged contrary thoughts, that, instead of writing the pedigree of his own nation, the sacred historian, till he comes down to a particular æra, has given a compleat and authentic account of all the families of the earth, from their common origin.

UPON this principle, therefore, we ground the following explanation of the passages under view. The sons of JAPHETH, of whom Moses first speaks, though he was the youngest of Noah's family, were, Gomer, mentioned by Ezekiel §, of whom, perhaps, came the Cimbrians, Josephus says, the Galatians ||: Of Magog, the Scythians: Of Madai, the Medes: Of Javan, the Greeks: Of Tubal, the Iberians: Of Mesech, the

* Gen. ix, 27. † Numb. xxiv, 24. ‡ Ezek. xxxix, 1.

§ Ezek. xxxviii, 6. See all the Prophets for the following account.

|| Joseph. Antiq. L. 1, cap. 7, whom also see.

Muscovites,

Muscovites, or the Cappadocians: Of Tiras, the Thracians.

OF the sons of Gomer, Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah, perhaps came the Germans, Paphlagonians, and Phrygians.

FROM the sons of Javan, Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim, it is said came the Æolians, Cilicians, Cyprians, and the Epirotes.

BY *these were the isles of the Gentiles divided*, that is, not only such places as were encompassed, but also to which they came, by sea.

AND the sons of HAM, Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. Hence came the Asiatic Ethiopians, the Egyptians, Lybians, and Canaanites.

CUSH begat the fathers of the Sabeans, and of the people who possessed Arabia, and the adjacent countries; and Nimrod mentioned before, *the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar: And from that land he went forth into Assyria**, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen.

AND Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim; and Naphtuhim; denoting probably several nations in Africa; and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, and Caphthorim, who carried the Philistines from the territories of Mizraim into the land of Canaan.

* So the Hebrew is to be read in this place.

AND

AND Canaan begat Sidon, and the fathers of the Hittites, of the Jebusites, the Emorites, and the Girgashites, of the Hivites, and the Arkites, and the Sinites, the Arvadites, and the Zemarites, and the Hamathites: In short, of all the people from Sidon, on the side of Gerar and Gaza, westward, to Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even to Lashah, on the east; and of the families of the Canaanites that were afterwards spread abroad.

THE Children of SHEM, were, Elam, from whom came the Elamites or Persians; Ashur, the Assyrians; Arphaxad, the Chaldees; Lud, the Lydians; and Aram, the Aramites, or Syrians.

THE children of Aram, were Uz, Job's country; and Hul, and Gether, and Mash, the seat of the Idumeans.

AND Arphaxad begat Salah, and Salah begat Eber, the father of the Hebrews, who had their name from him. Unto him was born Peleg, when the inhabitants of the earth were dispersed upon the confusion of languages, and his brother, whose name was Joktan. He was the father of thirteen who follow, whom Josephus places in the Indies, and from whose land, particularly that of Ophir, the ships of Solomon, that sailed from Ezion-geber, brought gold. Their dwelling is said by Moses to be about Sephar, a mount of the east. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations; and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

Now

Now these being their genealogies in the tenth chapter, the section at the end of the eleventh may be detached from the history of the dispersion, and supposed to contain the unbroken descent from Noah to Abraham, which appears to have been through ten generations, in like manner as ten had lived from Adam to Noah. Whence we see the life of man was much shortened after the flood, the time from that to the birth of Abraham being only about three hundred and seventy years, and from the creation to the flood, no less than one thousand six hundred and fifty-six *. The design plainly is to connect Terah, Abraham's father, with the line of SHEM, out of which was to spring the chosen family and people, and the messiah himself. This Terah, besides Abraham, was also the father of Nahor, and Haran, who begat Lot. *Haran died before his father, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abraham and Nahor took them wives: The name of Abraham's wife was Sarai; who had no child. And Terah took Abraham his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abraham's wife, and went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.*

* Indeed they married sooner.

DISSERTATION XVII.

OF DIVINE APPEARANCES.

GENESIS XII.

THE next divine dispensation that was the most remarkable, after the deluge and the dispersion of mankind over the face of the earth, by the confusion of languages at Babel, is the calling of Abraham, distant from the first event four hundred and forty-five years, and from the second two hundred and five; as the chronology in a foregoing table shews. But before we proceed to consider the reason, the wisdom, and effects of this dispensation, it will be highly necessary and useful to review and explain those extraordinary appearances of God, so frequently mentioned in scripture, to good men, and whole bodies of them, when any new commands or revelations were delivered; that so readers, who either have not noticed them, or have not comprehended their meaning, may the better understand, and be duly affected by such singular occurrences.

It

It is true, we have often spoken of the *Schachinah*, a Rabbinical word used to signify glorious appearances, as in the cases of Adam, Cain, and Noah, with whom divine conferences, on different occasions, were held; but, besides the general narrative, there may be a more particular enquiry into several passages of scripture on this subject, and some instructions, derived from hence, that may nearly concern us as christians.

Now, in the first verse of this chapter it is related that *the Lord had said unto Abraham*, or had appeared to him and said, *get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him, and came into the land of Canaan. And the Lord appeared unto Abraham there, and said unto thy seed will I give this land: And he builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.* This appearance in all probability, was in the same manner as that mentioned afterwards in the fifteenth chapter, of *the smoking furnace, and burning lamp*, which is only another expression for *the cloud and pillar of fire*, described, in other places, as signifying the divine presence. In a visible glory, perhaps, it likewise was, that *the Lord*, as it is in the seventeenth chapter, *appeared unto Abraham again, and said, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect: To Isaac also**, and certainly to Moses†, when in the wilderness of Midian, *he saw a bush as if it had been burning with fire, and the bush was not consumed.*

* Chap. xxvi.

† Exod. iii.

These two emblems, for emblems of the divinity they only were, cloud and fire, usually accompanied each other, in those early religious administrations; or were separated, according as the circumstances of time and place rendered it necessary. We have an instance of this, with respect to the tabernacle, when it was set up in the wilderness of Sinai, where *the cloud of the Lord covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled it, and was within the tabernacle, on the mercy-seat**, as the cloud was on the outside of it. And it is expressly said, that the appearance upon the tabernacle was, by day like a cloud; and like a fire, by night; suitable to the exigencies of the Israelites, who were to be guided and guarded by it.

- So real and regular was the safe guard and conduct, which this appearance afforded to the Israelites, that they never marched but when it moved, and where it led them. We are told that *when the cloud was taken up, from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up: For cloud and fire was on the tabernacle by day and night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys†*. And as the token of the divine presence thus directed them, *the Lord is said to go before them, and to lead them through the wilderness, by this cloud‡*.

Not to mention the cloud and lightnings that covered the top of Sinai, when the law was promulgat-

* Exod. xiii, 21. Exod. xl, 34. Numb. x, 34. † Exod. xl, 36, 37, 38. Deut. viii, 15.

ed, out of which God answered Moses by a voice*, it is to be remarked, that from the glory of the Lord, or the bright shining within the tabernacle, which was always carried about, the Lord spake unto Moses every thing which he delivered to the children of Israel in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. For when Moses went into the tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with God, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat, that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubims; and he spake unto him †; agreeable to the promise which God had given him before, I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment, unto the children of Israel ‡. And when Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up unto the Lord, they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet, as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness ||.

LIKEWISE, when the kingdom of the chosen people was formed, many ages afterwards, the glory of the Lord, as upon a throne, had its residence in the holy place, in Solomon's Temple, after it had taken possession of the house at its consecration. The relation at full length, is thus given: Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, out of the city of David, which is Zion. And

* Exod. xix, 19.

† Numb. vii, 89.

‡ Exod. xxv, 22.

|| Exod. xxiv, 9, 10.

*all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon; and all the elders of Israel came, and the Priests took up the ark. And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and it came to pass when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord: So that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud: For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.** For this reason, God is said in a multitude of passages, which all allude to this situation in the temple, *to dwell*, as the word *Schechinah* imports, or according to another translation, *to shine forth between the cherubims* †.

ISAIAH saw this glory greatly increased by an host of angels, and heard the Lord speaking from a throne, high and lifted up, within the temple; as *Ezekiel* repeatedly did, with many awful circumstances, in the land of the Chaldees, during his ministry. After the Babylonish captivity, indeed, it is to be observed, that no where in the prophets, under the *second* temple, is there any mention made of the glory of the Lord in it, as there was in the first. The messengers then sent by God to his people received their commands in a different manner; and preparation was making, and men's desires were excited, for a new and more permanent dispensation.

* Kings viii, 1, &c. † Psal. lxxx, 1.

AND yet the new testament is not without affording us instances of such appearances. The glory of the Lord, or a bright cloud, shone round about the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem, and the angel of the Lord came upon them *. While Jesus spake to his disciples, at the transfiguration, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, which said, *This is my beloved son, hear ye him* †. Saul saw the same appearance, when suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven ‡. Peter also in the prison, who was raised up loaded with chains, and the chains fell off from his hands §. And St. John, in the plainest manner, and by the fullest manifestations, in many parts of his revelations.

Now were there no difficulties arising from the account itself of those appearances, we should have nothing more to do, than to believe and improve them. But, it will be asked, who, in such cases, was the person that appeared and spake? Was it that same existence whom we call, *God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth*; or some other glorious being sent by him, and whose ministry led him to all those offices towards men? And what makes this question the more necessary is, that in several of the relations there is a seeming inconsistency and contradiction; especially where it is said, *The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the bush*: And yet it is said concerning the same person, *when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see that great sight, God called to him out of the midst of the bush*; and said, *I am the*

* St. Luke xi, 9.
3. § Acts xii, 7.

† St. Luke ix, 34, 35.

‡ Acts ix,

God of thy father, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; I AM, that I AM; and thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel; the Lord God of your fathers hath sent me unto you *. Here it is plainly affirmed to have been an angel who appeared to Moses, and said, I am the Lord God; and yet it is certain that an angel of the Lord God is not the Lord God himself, whose angel he is. How then is this difficulty to be removed?

THAT it was not really God the father who thus manifested himself to the saints of old, is clear and incontestible from our Saviour's own words, who perfectly understood the whole affair of divine appearances. *Ye have neither heard the voice of the father at any time, nor seen his shape* †. And again, *no man hath seen God at any time* ‡. And St. Paul says, *he is the invisible God, whom no man hath seen, or can see* ||. According to our Lord's rule then, when it is asserted, that the Lord, the most high God, appeared and spake to the Patriarchs and prophets, it is not to be understood, as if the appearance and voice, which they saw and heard, were, in fact, the form and shape, or voice of the Lord God himself; for *never, at any time, did they see his shape or hear his voice*.

AN eminent commentator †, indeed, thinks that the Greek word † translated, in some of those passages, *seen*, might as well be rendered *known*: But though this be a very good sense of it, and perfectly consistent with the doctrines of the gospel; yet it

* Exod. iii, 2. † St. John v, 37. ‡ St. John i, 18.
 || 1 Tim. vi, 16. § Grotius. † *Exposit.*

must fall far short of explaining all the phrases in the old and new testament, which represent God as absolutely invisible, dwelling in light inaccessible, to which no mortal eye can approach; and, therefore, the difficulty remains unobviated by this exposition.

ONE solution seems to be this; that in those divine splendors, or the Shechinah, God himself was present in some peculiar manner, attended with angels, as his ministers. Though by his immensity he is every where; yet by appearances stupendously glorious, he manifested his special approach to men, and held familiar intercourse with them by the mediation of his messengers, who spake in his name, and by his authority. Hence when they declared *I am the Lord God; I am the Almighty God; I AM that I AM**; this was only true of God, who was present in the Schechinah, whom those blessed spirits personated, and in whose service they were employed.

IN confirmation of this doctrine, let it be considered, that the scripture expressly says, it was an angel from the Lord who spake, when the Lord himself is said to speak. We read for instance, *the angel found Hagar, and said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly*†. *The Lord appeared to Abraham, and he lifted up his eyes, and lo! three men, or angels in the shape of men, stood by him.* When at Mount Moriah, he would have offered up his son in sacrifice, *the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless*

* Pentateuch, passim.

† Gen. xvi. 10.

* Gen. xviii. 2.

thee *. And it is said the Lord spake unto Joshua †, and yet, from the context, it appears evidently that it was not the Lord himself who spake, but an angel, under the title of the Captain of the Lord's host ‡.

LET it be likewise considered, that, from repeated testimonies in the writings of St. Paul, it was not the Lord who immediately spake himself, either to Moses, or the people at the Holy Mount. St. Stephen, whose history was recorded by the directions of that apostle, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, informs us, Moses was in the church in the wilderness with the angel who spake to him in Mount Sinai, and he received the law, the constitutions he then published, by the disposition of angels ||. And the same apostle positively declares, that the law was ordained by angels §; and the word, meaning the same law, spoken by angels was stedfast **. So that no doubt can remain about this matter in attentive and intelligent minds.

It is still, however, to be observed, that the law was given, and ordained by the Lord, the most high God, agreeably to the diction and injunctions of it. And all those appearances, now reviewed, being symbols of his presence, may, therefore, in this qualified sense, be said to be appearances of the Lord God himself.

In this very way, in fact, the people of God seem to have understood all such manifestations. When they saw a supernatural form, and heard a miraculous

* Gen. xxii, 17. † Joshua vi, 2. ‡ Joshua v, 15.
 || Acts vii, 38. § Gal. iii, 19. * Heb. i, 2.

voice, coming to them, and speaking as God himself, they knew, that it was only a messenger from him, speaking in his name. The angel of the Lord, as we have seen, appeared, and spake to Hagar, who knew instantly that it was the appearance of an angel, personating the most high: *She, therefore, called the name of the Lord, that spake unto her, thou God seest me**. And there wrestled a man with Jacob, a man, a messenger from God, and yet he called the name of the place peniel; because, says he, *I have seen God face to face†*; that is, I have had a manifestation from him. The common token by which those manifestations were distinguished, was the glory which attended the messenger, who pronounced the words. And whenever that glory appeared, the Jews knew the message came from God, whoever it was that brought it.

It may be asked who this angel was that appeared and spake of old, in the name and stile of the Almighty? If it was always one, or more? The Messiah himself? Or any of the host of heaven? *who are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation‡*. This indeed is a very pressing difficulty; as angels are often denominated, in scripture, by their rank and ministry, but have seldom any personal names given to them. When Jacob said to the angel that wrestled with him, *tell me, I pray thee, thy name?* he replied, by way of check and prohibition of such idle curiosity, *wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name||*? Except Michael and Gabriel, whom we find frequently mentioned,

* Gen. xvi, 13.

† Gen. xxxii, 30.

‡ Heb. i, 14.

|| Gen. xxxii. 29.

the one as an arch-angel and the other as an angel, there are not, perhaps, any other of these orders called by any particular names, within the compass of revelation. The Jews have supposed the first to have been their patron and guardian, from their emancipation till their entrance into the promised land. It is, however, the concurrent voice of antiquity, and of the most judicious Christians in these times, that our Lord Jesus Christ, before his incarnation, was the *Mediator* in the *Schechinah*, especially respecting the government and conduct of the Israelites: That it was he who brought them out of Egypt, and was their guide through the wilderness into Canaan in the form of a cloud by day, and of a pillar of fire by night*. For said Jehovah to Moses, *behold, I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for my name is in him*†. And by Isaiah he is called *the angel of God's presence, who in his love and in his pity redeemed his people, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old*‡. This seems strongly to characterise the son of God, and therefore it is not unlikely, that under former dispensations of providence in the revelation of moral and religious truths, he was ordinarily, perhaps always, the divine messenger to men, in the same manner as angels have been often employed by himself in messages to the earth, in all periods of time, and even since his ascension into heaven, after his triumph over the cross and the grave.

* Exod. xiii, 21. † Exod. xxiii, 20, 21. ‡ Isaiah, lxiii, 9.

THE doctrine, then, meant to be established here is this; the ever blessed and divine Person, whom, since his incarnation, we distinguish in the holy trinity by the name of JESUS CHRIST was the Lord God in the Schechinah, who spake in his own name, as the creator and proprietor of the universe, as the father of all the ages and oeconomies; or was the speaker to mankind from the Schechinah, where JEHOVAH, the Majesty of God, was present.

NONE needs to object that this is an unworthy representation of our Saviour, seeing it by no means respects his divine nature, nor makes him an angel, as angels really are, of an inferior, created, and dependent nature; but regards his office only, as the minister of God to man; which we see he afterwards consented to be, in the most astonishing manner.

If there be any difficulty apprehended in the attestation given at the holy baptism and transfiguration, it is carefully to be remarked, that, on both occasions, it is only said *a voice came from heaven* *, and *a voice came out of the cloud* †; which, instead of embarrassing the foregoing doctrine, highly favours it.

BUT to bring this discourse to a conclusion: It was certainly the peculiar honor and advantage of the Israelites, that they had such a public visible manifestation of the presence and favour of God. *Who are Israelites?* says St. Paul, boasting of the privilege, *they to whom pertaineth the adoption and the GLORY* ‡.

* St. Mat. iii, 17.

† St. Mat. xvii, 5.

‡ Rom. ix, 4.

This was a dispensation well adapted to that age of the church, especially at its first institution under Moses, when men could not, by abstract reasoning, be so well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God; and, therefore, stood in need of some extraordinary visible token, to strike and affect their minds, with a sense of his presence, power and authority, favour and protection.

AND in allusion to the Schechinah with which Moses conversed in the mount, it is to be observed, St. Paul tells the first believers, *we all*, that is all we Christians, *with open face, have the GLORY of the Lord*, reflected upon us, from the face of Jesus Christ, as from a mirror, *and are in the dispositions of our minds, changed into the same image of goodness and excellence, and pass from glory to glory, or grow purer and brighter, even as by the spirit of the Lord* *. *The word, long unembodied, was at length made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we as well as the disciples, behold the glory of our Redeemer, as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth* †. By his living and conversing in the world, and teaching sinners fully and plainly the great truths relating to God's gracious purposes, our heavenly father, and his merciful regards to men, his presence in his church, and his power engaged in the defence of his children, and to bring them to the possession of everlasting rest, are more clearly and illustriously manifested in the gospel, than his favourable presence and protection were by the Schechinah in the wilderness, in the temple, or in any other place.

* 2 Cor. iii, 18.

† St. John, i, 14.

DISSERTATION XVII. 283

WE, who live under the dispensation of grace and truth, and are, or may be, so well acquainted with the nature and perfections of our maker and lawgiver, have no need of any extraordinary visible token of the divine presence. The glorious truths of the gospel, revealed by Jesus Christ, are our *Heb. 1:3* shining from him on our minds, and filling them with comfort and joy, in the assured hope of his present care and blessing, and of the enjoyment of glory, honor and immortality, in the world to come.

Of the Corruption of the World, preceding the calling of ABRAHAM.

GENESIS I. XIII. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40.

BEFORE we proceed to the exhibition of the grand scheme of providence, in the calling of Abraham, and the glorious promises and effects of it; it may still be necessary and useful to trace, as far as we can, the sources from whence the idolatry and wickedness of the world to which it followed after the general deluge, and rapidly increased in those early ages.

Now, concerning this, it may be asserted with a high degree of probability, that the *Gen. 11:1-9* corruption to which the deluge is not altogether to be imputed to simple irreligion, that is, to unbelief and actual profanity, but in a great measure to selfishness, directed to wrong objects and purposes. They had not been created to glory in as God, by lives

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XVIII

Of the Corruption of the WORLD, preceding the
calling of ABRAHAM.

GENESIS XII.

BEFORE we proceed to the exhibition of the grand scheme of providence, in the calling of Abraham, and the gracious purposes and effects of it; it may still be necessary and useful to trace, as far as we can, the sources from whence the idolatry and wickedness of the world so quickly followed after the general scourge, and rapidly increased in those early ages.

Now, concerning this, it may be asserted with a high degree of probability, that the spreading of corruption so soon after the deluge, is not altogether to be imputed to simple irreligion, that is, to immediate and actual profanity, but, in a great measure, to religion itself, directed to wrong objects and purposes. While men retained *the knowledge* of the true God, they had not been careful *to glorify him as God*, by lives
of

of holiness and obedience, nor to be *thankful** for his benefits, as St. Paul, on this very matter, plainly tells us. And through the pride and wantonness of human nature, indulging to idle conceits, and false reasonings, they involved their own understandings, by degrees, and that of each other, in the thickest clouds of error and delusion.

THE heavenly bodies, perhaps, engaged much of their attention: The sun, moon, and stars were probably considered as illustrious intelligences, which, by an eminent exaltation in the universe must have the highest interest in the favour of God, in the direction of human affairs, and the distribution of all temporal blessings; and, therefore, men would be led to suppose it sufficient to all the purposes of religion, to secure their friendship, as mediators between God and them. That they did really carry their veneration for those shining luminaries to an undue length, to a kind of worship and service, we may clearly see from what is said by Job, who is supposed to have lived contemporary with Abraham, or in the age before him: Vindicating his own innocence, from a multitude of offences which his friends alledged against him, he uses these words; *if I have beheld the sun when he shined, or the moon walking in her brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand—then I should have denied the God that is above*†; intimating, that those who did such things had forgotten the divine majesty, supreme over all, whose ministers only those orbs, and all the host of heaven, were. And when once men's conceptions were thus depraved, in

* Rom. i, 21.

† Job, xxxi, 26, 27, 28.

regard to things which could neither hurt nor benefit them, the transition was easy, from respect and admiration, to homage and undue honor, by such impious rites as were invented by the folly and ignorance of such votaries. Thus it actually was: mankind were deceived, by the very religious profession which they made, into the practice of all manner of lewdness and vice. For the attributes of those supposed deities and benefactors of men, being feigned purely by human imagination, they would naturally be represented by those who dressed up the theology, and had their own interests and lusts to serve, in such a sort as best suited their own corrupt tastes and inclinations. At least, if this was not the case at first, it may easily be conceived to have been so in process of time, by after improvements on the original scheme of idolatry. And by this method men would be led to believe, that they might be religious, and gain health, long life, fruitful seasons, plenty and prosperity, not only without the practice of holiness and truth, but positively by lewd and wicked actions; and thus religion would be turned into an encouragement to vice, and the principles of reason and integrity extinguished.

WITH respect to the progress of idolatry, the fact is certain, that the most odious idolatry came to be universally established, which was succeeded, or rather attended, by abominable lusts and intemperance.

THEN, either the wisdom of the wisest of men, would be lost, or what was left of it would sink into cunning, which would be exercised on the foibles of the rest. Hence the notions of fate, destiny, fortune, chance,

chance, necessity, proceeding from the stars, and the nature of things, with many other delusions, would be introduced. And it is well known that professors of the vilest arts arose, pretending to look into futurity, to gratify malicious desires, to secure good, and prevent bad luck, to those who consulted them: *Diviners, observers of times, incanters, witches, or such as pretended to work on the mind and body, for evil purposes, by herbs or poisons; charmers, consultants with a pretended familiar spirit, wizards and necromancers**; and a long list of other such impostors, many of whom were deceived wretches themselves. And so far were they infatuated, that they made their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, at the peril of their lives, and many of them were consumed, under the notion of sacrifices to their idols, as we read in many parts of the scripture; probably that the former might gain their blessing, in strength and fortune, in which the offerers expected their share; and that the latter might be happy in their future favor. Thus their views, and consequently their hope and trust, were diverted from God, and his providence, to creatures of the imagination, and the basest of men.

Thus did the neglect and abuse of understanding, and the indulged irregular inclinations of the heart, prove principal springs and causes of this defection from God and his service: But we may believe it was forwarded and completed by the suggestions and instigations of *the devil and his angels, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit whom God permits to work in the children of disobedience, and to deceive the nations* †. For

* Deut. xviii, 10. † Ephe. ii. 2.

when men receive not the truth in the love of it, that they may be saved, God judicially sends strong delusions, that they may believe a lie; that they may all be condemned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness * 2 Theff. ii. 11. 12.

In this manner idolatry first began, and by these means it spread in the world; and would have prevailed universally, as the remaining uncorrupted few dropt off, and men of understanding were drawn in by various allurements, for wonderful is the influence of established customs, and uncontroled general example,; insomuch that the heart of Solomon the great and wise, was afterwards, through the love of pleasure, so far turned away after idols, that he built high places and altars in honor of them, even in the city of Jerusalem.

WHAT now in such circumstances shall be done? The delusions of idolatry are strong, and the understanding weak, so that all nations were then running into it at once and alike. And such was the insatuating and spreading nature of the infection, that there was no rational prospect of the reformation of any one of them. Violence seldom works conviction; argument and reasoning would have no effect, and the most dreadful judgments from heaven, were forgotten or disregarded. The knowledge and worship of the one living and true God, the great principle of goodness, and of public and private happiness, was now in danger of being totally lost in the earth,

* 2 Theff. ii. 11. 12.

if the father and governor of men had not then, by a merciful scheme, prevented it.

AND this scheme, under several variations and improvements, was to reach to the end of time, that idolatry might never again universally prevail; nor the sense and service of the living and true God perish. The scheme was this; to choose and adopt one family, afterwards to be formed into a nation, instructed in religious knowledge by God himself, and favoured with such extraordinary privileges and honors, above all other nations of the earth, as were in their own nature adapted to engage them, by the most rational motives, to adhere to God and his worship. At the same time, to prevent their being infected with the idolatries and vices of the rest of the world, as they certainly would have been, had they mingled with them, they were to be distinguished and separated from all other people by their diet, their dress, and divers civil and religious rites and ceremonies; and more particularly circumcision, by which they might be certainly known from all men. Thus they would be kept together in a body, and hindered from mixing with, and being corrupted by, their idolatrous neighbours, and in every respect fitted to be an example and instruction to them under the various dispensations with which they were to be visited. And, further, their laws and religious institutions being originally recorded in books, would more certainly be preserved and known in all future ages and generations. Thus was there provided a storehouse of religious knowledge, concerning the being of God, his perfections, and providence;

U

a whole

a whole nation of priests, as they are expressly called, and a school of instruction and wisdom for all the world. Or the nation of the Israelites may be considered as a piece of leaven which, in process of time, was to leaven the whole lump or mass of mankind.

ABRAHAM, a person of the most eminent piety and justice, was chosen to be the head and father of this nation; that as he would always be held in great veneration among them, he might always shine before their eyes as an illustrious pattern of godliness, and a preacher of faith and righteousness. This honorable testimony of Jehovah concerning him stands on record in these remarkable words, *I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the ways of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may accomplish unto Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him.*

It is greatly worth our while to observe more minutely the steps and methods by which God was pleased to discipline this notable patriarch, and to train him and his for the purpose in view. Abraham, as we heard in the beginning of the discourse, is required to cast himself wholly upon God's providence, by removing at the divine command, from his own kindred and country, to an unknown distant land, which God would shew him, assuring him of his presence and special blessing. Thus God took him under his immediate care and protection. In this strange land he wandered about as long as he lived, but God was with him every where. God appeared to him, and conversed with him frequently and familiarly

familiarly. By extraordinary interpositions, and express declarations from time to time God encouraged, directed, prospered, guarded and provided for him. He became very rich, great and honorable; but all was most visibly the gift and operation of God: God gave him repeated assurances, that he would make of him a great nation, give his posterity the whole land of *Canaan*, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. But the first fruit of this promise, *a son*, he was not to see, till the birth of that son was manifestly the miraculous effect of divine power, and insured all his hopes. What could be more engaging than all these circumstances? What more proper to excite in a man of Abraham's goodness, duty, affection, and confidence towards God? The same encouragements, blessings, and promises, are continued to his family, and repeated to *Isaac*, and afterwards to *Jacob*, and the same heavenly correspondence is kept up with them during their lives: Till at length *Joseph*, by a most wonderful series of events, settles his father and brethren, as had been likewise foretold, in *Egypt*, then a plentiful country of genius and learning, and the resort of the curious and inquisitive, to be a sort of nursery for them, till the time came that the *Amorites* were to be driven out of the promised land.

BUT we have rather anticipated the scripture history; and therefore shall conclude at present with observing, that the ground of this scheme, and of God's singular regard to *Abraham* and his posterity, was the covenant of grace, the promise or grant of favors and blessings to mankind in *Jesus Christ* our Lord; who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world,

tho' not manifested till the last times *. This covenant or grant was first published to Adam immediately after his transgression; *Her seed, meaning the woman's, shall bruise thy head, O serpent, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* The same covenant, we may be well assured, was well known by all the ancient patriarchs, but much more clearly revealed to Abraham, as we see in the 12th, 17th, 18th, and 22d chapters of this book.

1 Pet. i, 20.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XIX.

Of the Political, Religious, and Moral State of the Eastern Regions, about the Time Abraham was called.

GENESIS XIV, & XVIII, 20, 21.

AS to the *political* state of the world at that time, it plainly appears that mankind had formed themselves into separate communities, greater and smaller, as convenience and power determined, for their mutual safety and happiness. The territories of some of the sovereigns, we may be sure were very confined, as the natural equality of men, in those early ages, gave none of them any pretensions to pre-eminence over others, and being all equally warlike, and equally jealous of their liberty, conquest would be no easy matter. These facts appear evident from the account we have in the *fourteenth* chapter, of so many kings possessing provinces, which when joined together, would make no extensive empire, like that of Babylon; nor is it unlikely that there were a great many more, within the bounds of Abraham's operations, whose names and actions are not recorded.

SUCH

SUCH petty governments were well calculated to promote internal justice and order, as the chief magistrate would be capable of attending to every branch of his office, with the greatest ease: And yet interests being various, and sometimes opposite, in the different states, there would be many occasions of injury, complaint and revenge; as formerly were in our own country, when it was divided into small nations and kingdoms. Accordingly we here find *nine kings, four against five, joining battle in the vale of Siddim*, where, it seems, there was considerable carnage and plunder, occasioned by incursions which the king of *Elam*, and his confederates had made into the lands of those kings who opposed them. It was at the conclusion of this battle, that *Abraham armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued the conquerors unto Dan*, to rescue Lot, his brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom; whom (when the king of that city had been killed) they had led away captive, with his household, and *taken all his goods*. Returning victorious, the *new* king of Sodom went out, in a congratulatory and respectful manner, to meet Abraham; and likewise *Melchisedec, king of Salem, who was the priest of the most high God, brought forth bread and wine*, to refresh him and his servants, after the slaughter, and fatigue of their journey, and solemnly *blessed him*.

HAVING mentioned this royal-priest, we shall speak at greater length of several persons who were at that time, most eminent for their *piety, and service of the true God*. This Melchisedec was the most illustrious among them; and yet of his history strange mis-

conceptions

conceptions are entertained. It is clear that he was a worshipper of the true God, a person of the most exemplary justice and sincere devotion; remained absolutely untainted amidst the general corruption of the country in which he lived; and, for the greater promotion of true religion, was himself a *priest*, as well as a *king*, and performed the sacred offices among his own people. From this distinguished man, Abraham received a benediction in these remarkable words; *Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.* Thus Melchisedec prayed for Abraham, and offered up humble praises and thanksgivings for the remarkable mercies of his late victory. And the patriarch on the other hand, paid his acknowledgements to the Almighty, by presenting the tenth of what he had taken in the battle, to his priest, by whom he had been so devoutly blessed. Here then is a plain and striking example of just sentiments of God, of simple, but rational and hearty worship; and of grateful affections for his kind providence.

BUT what has been said may not be sufficient to satisfy the curiosity of every reader, concerning this singular personage; especially as St. Paul has declared things of him*, which have greatly amused the unlearned; namely, that he was *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.* Now, in all this, no more was intended, than that his genealogy is not reckoned up in the same manner that the genealogies of several other

* Hebrews, vii. Chapter.

persons and families are, particularly in the house of *Aaron*; nor yet his birth and death recorded in the history of the patriarchs. For who he was, the apostle precisely informs us; *this Melchisedec*, says he, *was king of Salem, and priest of the most high God there, or of the place afterwards called Jerusalem; and, consequently, had both father and mother, and descent, and beginning of days, and end of life, as other men have, though the knowledge of those matters has not been transmitted to us. And the use made of his character, is, to convince the Jews, by an argument adapted to their own prejudices, that there was a priesthood distinct from, and prior to theirs, and of another order; for this Melchisedec, is, by interpretation, king of righteousness, and after that also, king of Salem, that is king of peace; and therefore his order was not, like the Jewish, ceremonial and temporary, but of an eternal, unchangeable, and universal nature, not limited to time or family, and so a fitter emblem of him, and of his priesthood, who was to come, concerning whom God hath said, thou art a priest for ever*, and the sceptre of thy kingdom, like that of Melchisedec's, is a sceptre of righteousness†.*

But to return after this digression; it is probable that Abraham's neighbours and confederates, *Mamre, Eshcol and Aner*, were likewise just and good men. For though they were Amorites, they might yet be uninfected with the vices and idolatries of their countrymen, seeing Abraham lived in friendship and alliance with them; and it was not till about four hundred years after this, that the sins of that nation were full.

* Heb. vii. 17.

† Heb. i. 8.

Nor can it be reasonably supposed, that, in the patriarch's time, the principles of natural and traditional religion were totally extinguished among the Amorites themselves.

We are certain that Abraham himself was, in that age, an illustrious instance of the true knowledge and fear of God being preserved in the earth, of righteousness and wisdom, of which, according to the divine testimony, he was a teacher *to his children and household*, and, no doubt, to all others within the sphere of his instruction and example. His history, from the first appearance of God to him, in the land of *Haran*, till his death in *Mamre*, where he was a stranger, is the most extraordinary, affecting and edifying imaginable; through which nothing breathes so much as love and reverence for the Almighty, and confidence in his truth and mercy: Especially who must not be struck with those expressions of awful respect which he testified for his maker, when, in the benevolence of his heart, he interceded for the preservation of those debauched and wicked cities, which were threatened with a signal and compleat destruction! Oh, says he, repeatedly, *let not the Lord be angry, that I have taken it upon me to speak to him, who am but dust and ashes: And he drew near, and said, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked: Thad be far from thee: Shall not the JUDGE of ALL THE EARTH do right?*

Nor can we when speaking of such persons, omit just Lot, Abraham's nephew, who lived in Sodom, when it's abominations were most atrocious; and yet, by an example incorruptible *reproved the filthy deeds*

the Sodomites, though to no effect, *their conversation* being incorrigible, and justly meriting the judgment to which they were reserved. He hath the honourable character, that *he was a righteous man, and his righteous soul was vexed with what he saw and heard of those among whom he lived**; For this his life was saved from their overthrow, and the angel, on that occasion, shewed him the condescending indulgence, *haste thee and escape, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither*.

Job likewise was, in the patriarchal age, a person of the most distinguished piety and devotion. The reality of his person, the eminence of his character, his fortitude and patience in very great afflictions, his preceding and subsequent felicity, are allowed by all who deserve any notice; and though various conjectures have been indulged about the time and place in which he lived, it is still generally concluded (and were the reasons to be repeated, they would appear very strong for such a conclusion †) that his existence was either co-temporary with that of Abraham, or, at most, not above an age after; as his book, in all probability written by himself, proves it, by a variety of marks, to be one of the oldest, as undoubtedly it is one of the noblest books in the world. His country was *Arabia*, demonstrable not only from local names, as Uz, Teman, and Shuhah, but (as the best critics acknowledge) from the many *Arabic* words which he mixes with his *Hebrew*. And for this very reason, admitting that Moses knew his case and writings, he might yet pass over him in the history of the primitive patriarchs, as he lived in another country.

* 2. Peter, 11. 6, 7, 8, 9.

† Vide, Schultens in Jobum.

than

than Canaan, and was neither within the *Abrahamic* covenant, nor the *Jewish* peculiar.

WHAT the state of religion, and it's principal doctrines were, we might here describe, when writing on this period, but as they can be easily collected, from the above account of persons that lived in it, we shall proceed to the *moral* state of those parts of the world, referred to in the title of this dissertation, and suggested by the fatal catastrophe recorded in the *eighteenth* chapter.

THE case was this: Four cities, *Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim*, which stood in a very extensive, fruitful and pleasant vale, and lying along the sides of the river *Jordan*, were so infected with the idolatry spoken of before, and the vices usually attending it, that the inhabitants of those cities, enjoying plenty, and the most effeminating delights of their country, through ease, *pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness**, became, we have reason to believe, the most flagitious sinners that were upon the earth, giving themselves up to all sorts of voluptuousness and profanity; and at length, grew so debauched, that they indulged to the vilest species of lewdness, which, from them, is called *Sodomy* to this day, *going after strange flesh, men with men working that which is unseemly*†; infomuch that God, infinitely holy and pure, beholding their enormous immoralities, and their in-

* Ezek. xvi, 49.

† Rom. i, 27.

consistency with his government, resolved to consume such an abominable people quickly, and even destroy their country, with fire from heaven.

The Lord God therefore said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come up unto me; and if not I will know. This representation of God, and of his counsels, every one will acknowledge, is not to be literally explained, any more than his going down to see the tower of Babel, and confound the language of the nations; as if he really had ears, like our organs of hearing, as if wickedness literally sent up a cry, or that God, who knows all things most minutely, on every occasion, could know them better on nearer and closer inspection; and, therefore, the whole is to be understood by way of accommodation to our conceptions, whose minds, in this embodied state, as was before observed, must be impressed with proceedings under the notion of our own; and plainly means this, that the crimes of the *Sodomites* and of the neighbouring towns were so multiplied and heinous as to exceed, *mount up above*, those of all other sinners in the world; and that the ruler of it, would, accordingly, attend, in a peculiar manner, to their iniquities, mark them out, and devote them to perdition.

BUT before the ruin of those execrated cities came upon them, the Almighty, in great condescension, announced the decree to Abraham, whose family was then selected from the rest of mankind, to be the receivers

ceivers and recorders of the divine will. That holy man, in his intercession, at the twenty third verse, disputed not the equity of the purpose, nor doubted the mercifulness of the most high; but only out of an instinctive sympathy, which in good minds is always strongest, pleaded for the wretched victims, over whom destruction impended, and that his kins-man and relations, who dwelt in Sodom, might be preserved. And so great the goodness and compassion of God appeared to be, that, notwithstanding the demerit of those transgressors; so great his regard to those that fear him, and his readiness for their sakes to bestow blessings even upon the unworthy, he would have spared them all, if but ten truly sober and righteous persons could have been found in all those cities of the plain; but they were universally and irrecoverably corrupted.

BUT the same grace which had preserved *just Lot* from the contagion which reigned in Sodom, was likewise to protect him from that vengeance which was about to descend on it's sinful citizens. For this purpose, the Almighty sent to him two angels, who arrived at Sodom the day before it was to be destroyed. Those angels he most complaisantly invited, and hospitably entertained in his house; which excited the baseness and brutality of the Sodomites to such a degree, that nothing more, than their behaviour on that occasion, needs to be adduced to shew what length they had carried principles of debauchery and profaness. *Where are the men that came in to thee this night? Bring them out unto us that we may know them.* In obedience to the affectionate enquiry of the angels, about Lot's other relations in that wretched city, *he said*

said to his sons-in-law, who had married his two daughters, up, get ye out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city; and no doubt, added many other things, concerning the execrableness of the inhabitants, to convince and alarm them: But so impious and depraved were they also, that all his warnings and solicitations were vain; *he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.* They saw, at that time, no appearance of their city, in a peaceable and flourishing condition, being destroyed so suddenly, by any means; and least of all by fire from heaven; and, therefore, regarded their father's apprehensions and advice as ridiculous and absurd, the effect of a disordered imagination, or of dotage; and so staying in Sodom, received the just recompence of their incredulity.

AT the dawn of the morning, *the angels took Lot by the hand, and led him out of the city with his wife, and two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him:* And farther permitted him, at his own earnest request, to flee to Zoar, a town likewise destined to ruin, but not overthrown for his sake.

SCARCELY had Lot arrived at *that little city*, when at the rising of the sun, there was poured upon Sodom and Gomorba, brimstone and fire out of heaven. The dreadful storm overthrew those cities, and the other cities of the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities; and from it's being said, that all which grew upon the ground was destroyed, and other circumstances besides, it is not unlikely, that there was a terrible earthquake, which broke up the very soil of the earth; and a violent irruption of bituminous waters, which turned the

whole

whole valley, into one heavy, foetid and pestilential lake, called since *the dead, or salt sea*, about thirty miles long, and ten miles broad, and remains to this very day *. Thus the Almighty, for the wickedness of those who dwelt in them, overthrew those cities, that they should never be inhabited, nor dwelt in any more, from generation to generation.

THIS dreadful instance of divine vengeance, through the mercy of God, removed the bad examples of those daring sinners, had a natural fitness to awaken and reform the surviving, and was wisely intended to remain a perpetual monument of the wrath of God upon the wickedness of mankind.

ONE thing, on this subject, only remains to be considered; *Lot's wife looked from behind her, and she became a pillar of salt*. For the right use and understanding of this passage, it must be remembered, that the sulphureous storm did not begin to fall upon Sodom, till Lot had reached Zoar; but his wife looked back before he reached it; and on the way to that little city. At that time, therefore, Sodom, and the fine country around it, may be supposed to have appeared in the same pleasant and serene state as ever. Consequently it was a look of affection that she gave to the place, and of regret to leave it, and their goods that were in it, which, no doubt, were sumptuous, suitable to Lot's quality, and of great value. This shewed unbelief and distrust of what the angels had affirmed, that God would immediately destroy the

* See Mr. Maundrell, chaplain to the factory at Aleppo, p. 85.

country. She either did not believe, or did not regard their message; left her husband to proceed by himself, with his two daughters; and stopt by the way, and would go no farther, at such a distance from *Zoar*, and so near to *Sodom* perhaps, as to be involved in the terrible shower, and thereby turned into a nitrous pillar. In no other way can the sense and force of our Lord's admonition be understood; *remember Lot's wife* *. Let the judgment of God upon her, warn you, as if he had said, of the folly and danger of lingering after, and being lothe to part with, small and temporal things, when your life and happiness, the greatest and most lasting concerns, are at stake.

THESE and such like monuments of the divine anger upon sinners, were designed to instruct mankind in succeeding ages; and have as powerful and expressive a voice as any dictates whatever, either of experience or revelation; though, like all other awakening calls, they may be despised and forgotten. The inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorha* had a recent instance of God's severity, in the flood of *Noah*, which swept the offenders all away; but they let it slip out of their minds, and hardened their hearts, so as neither to apprehend or believe any such danger awaiting themselves, even when it was declared to them. We again have their destruction added to that of the *Antediluvians*, and in it a fit emblem of the universal conflagration, and of that punishment that will overtake all the ungodly. An apostle says, *the cities of Sodom and Gomorha suffered the vengeance of eternal fire* †; which is literally true in one sense, as fire totally and

* *St. Luke* xvii, 32. † *St. Jude*.

for ever destroyed those cities never to be built again. Thus, in this dreadful catastrophe, God revealed, and gave a specimen of, his future wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man. And tho' there should be no present appearances of it, we should not therefore be secure. For, as our Lord says, *the men of Sodom eat and drank, they bought and sold, they planted, they builded; that is, were thoughtless and busy; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: Even thus, says he, shall it be in the day that the son of man is revealed.*

• Rem. i, 18.

† St. Luke xviii, 27.

WHAT the Lord had spoken concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, we have fully recorded in the seventh chapter of this book, at the sixteenth verse. I will blot out, said God, and will give thee a son and a daughter: yet I will blot out Sodom and Gomorrah, and the shall be a waste of no more. King of the East of the East. This promise was again repeated, with farther assurance soon after in the eighteenth chapter, in these words: I will visit upon them their iniquity, and will requite them according to the time of their visitation. An event so much the more glorious, that, as appears from the history, Abraham was impatient and discontented at his going, and one not born in his own house was likely to be his heir; and so little to be expected, now ninety-nine years old, and as we gather from Abraham's account, eighty-nine, that no less than a miracle could bring it about.

DISSERTATION XX.

Of the Birth of ISAAC ; and the Promises made to his Seed.

GENESIS XXI.

WHAT the Lord had spoken concerning Sarah, Abraham's wife, we have fully recorded in the seventeenth chapter of this book, at the sixteenth verse ; *I will bless her, said God, and will give thee a son also of her ; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations : Kings of people shall be of her.* This promise was again repeated, with farther assurance, soon after in the eighteenth chapter, in these words ; *I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life ; and lo ! Sarah thy wife shall have a son.* An event so much the more gracious, that, as appears from the history, Abraham was impatient and discontented at his going childless, and one not born in his own house was likely to be his heir ; and so little to be expected, Abraham being now ninety-nine years old, and Sarah, as we gather from Abraham's account, eighty-nine, that no less than a miracle could bring it about ;
in-

inasmuch that, though Abraham, conformable to his constant character, *believed in God, respecting this matter, and had it counted to him for righteousness**, Sarah laughed within herself, saying, *after I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?* And received for her doubtfulness, bordering on unbelief, this just reprimand; *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* Whose faithfulness did not fail through her unbelief: *For the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.*

SHE conceived and bare Abraham a son, who called his name Isaac, as he had been commanded; and this is he whom the scriptures frequently denominate *the son of the promise* †, not so much for his being previously announced to the illustrious patriarch, when his hopes of a son were expired, as for the multitude of blessings, of which he was to be the instrument of conveyance from God to an innumerable people, through successive ages, then remote. *In Isaac*, said God, *shall thy seed be called; and bringing Abraham forth abroad, perhaps to some of the mountains of Canaan, where he was a stranger, under a spacious extended sky, said, look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; for so shall thy seed be; even like the dust of the earth in number: and lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seeest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.* In which gracious promise, on this occasion, the stipulations included are so obvious, that the

* Gen. xv. 6. Rom. iv. 9.—22. Gal. iii. 6.

† Acts, iii. 25. Rom. ix. 8. Gal. iii. 29, and iv. 28.

plainest account, and briefest enumeration, will express them; namely, an extraordinary regard, protection and favor; a wonderful multiplication of his race, even to the forming whole nations and kingdoms out of it; abundance of worldly honor and prosperity; the gift of all the land of Canaan, to a part of that prodigious increase of his seed; a part only it was; for Abraham's descendants by Hagar and Keturah, who were not of the promised seed, but of the branch of *Esau*, which was separated from it, had no share in that inheritance of the holy nation; and, last of all, among these particulars, is comprehended the foundation and completion of all other promises through *Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham* *.

How astonishing is such condescension on the part of the most high God, the maker and possessor of heaven and earth! to bestow so much regard, and so many of his benefits, upon any one of his creatures, especially so weak and undeserving as man is! It is true, the ground of this indulgence towards Abraham, and his posterity, was the covenant of grace, the promise or grant of favors and blessings to mankind in general in Christ Jesus our Lord; for whose appearance all the dispensations of providence, from the earliest times were preparing: Yet though this was the main purpose, the methods of fulfilling it were such as God usually employs, and Abraham was honored as the grantee of such blessings to the world, because *he walked before the Almighty in his generation, and was perfect*; and constituted the head and father of a great and conspicuous nation, because the Lord

* St. Matthew, 1, 1.

knew that he would command his children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. Therefore, every mark of distinction that attended him, and his progeny, may be considered as a temporal and immediate reward, for his eminent piety and righteousness; the divine goodness, in its manifestations, being always singularly bountiful to every such excellent character.

Nor were these promises to the father of the faithful, more ample in their nature, than the accomplishment of every one of them was exact: For not to mention the numerous tribe of *Ismael*, whom *Hagar* bare to him, and the families and states erected by *Keturah*, Abraham's second wife, who, as has been said, was never reckoned in the line of the chosen people, what incredible swarms issued from him through the channel of *Isaac*, whose birth we are now contemplating! in so much that in four hundred and thirty years after, that is, at the coming out of Egypt, where they had been as in a nursery, the *Israelites*, as reckoned by *Moses* and *Aaron* there, were six hundred thousand and odds, from twenty years old and upwards, even all that were able to go forth to war; which, by a common standard, when women and children are included, swells them to the enormous body of two millions, carried as on eagles wings, to the promised land, and brought to God himself. And what national blessings, above all people, his bounty shed down upon them, while they continued obedient, is well known, and an explanation here would only anticipate the history. Their population still increased; for in the days of King *David*, when he numbered the people of *Israel* and *Judah*, we see there were thirteen hundred thousand men of war; making

making the whole, according to the former calculation, no less than *five millions and two hundred thousand souls*, within the narrow limits of the realm of *Palastine*. When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son among the people of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, and remembered the greatest of mercies, he had promised to him, and to his seed; in whom all men were to be blessed.

THIS ancient scheme, or gracious procedure of providence, is distinguished from others of a like nature, by the name of the covenant which God had made with Abraham, renewed with Isaac, and confirmed with Jacob; and, along with the *moral law* delivered at Sinai, the *ritual* of worship, and the statutes of civil obligation, was the ground and substance of that admirable oeconomy, which obtained in the Jewish nation for *fifteen hundred years*.

AND, in like manner, as all covenants, human and divine, have seals and ratifications, this had also it's sign or token. It is described in the seventeenth chapter of this book, slightly considered before; that every *male-child* among the posterity of Abraham was to be *circumcised*, to bear a secret mark in the flesh, as a testimony of their obedience, and of their belonging to the body of God's people: And so strict and unexceptionable was the command, and the blessings of the covenant were so dependant on the observance of this institution, that we read, at the fourteenth verse of this chapter; *And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: He hath broken my covenant.* This was the obligation imposed with the promise; and, accordingly

accordingly, as he had done a year before to himself, and his son Ishmael, and to all the men of his house, *Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him.* Here it is observable, that, as Abraham's name was changed at the institution of circumcision*, Isaac's was given to him, when he received the badge of initiation; signifying no doubt, that when God's covenant was entered into, there was a dedication of the person by name to his service, and a solemn enrollment among his people.

HENCE it is evident, that this covenant, whereof circumcision was the seal, was, like all other engagements, where two parties are concerned, reciprocal; and intended not only as a declaration and pledge of God's favor to the Jewish people, but likewise as a special obligation on all their posterity, to the same obedience and holiness, for which their progenitor had been so remarkable, even before he was called by God: For St. Paul says of him, that *he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet uncircumcised*†. And whereas the restraining men's carnal appetites, and mortifying their members which are upon the earth‡, contain, in a manner, all good living, in as much as it destroys the chief temptations to the contrary; so the action and mark itself of circumcision imports, very significantly, the holy discipline, and severe morality, wherein they were to walk, who were thus admitted into covenant

* This circumstance was omitted in it's proper place, because it was minute in the orthography; though in itself it is of great importance: As is also the name Sarah, changed from Sarai.

† Rom. iv, ii. ‡ Col. iii, 5.

with

with God. For it teaches directly, and forcibly admonishes, the duty of abating and limiting all looser desires; which, through the world, and especially in those eastern countries, proved a general source of all other injustice and irregularity; and, therefore, whatever symbolized and typified the due government of these, may, very properly, denote the suppressing likewise the rest of our inordinate affections, and preserving the purity and order of the whole man.

In fact, the rite was external, and the effect of it remained visible on one part of the flesh only, but the import was deep, and extensive through the mind and actions, as Moses, and the prophets explain and apply it; where they use the term *uncircumcised* to express whatever was improper, impure, or unholy. The legislator alledges his own inability of speech, in this stile, *O Lord, I am a man of uncircumcised lips* *; and concerning the fruit of new planted trees, which was reputed unclean, and forbidden to be eat of for three years, he says, *ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised*. Jeremiah thus complains of the Jewe in his time, *to whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken*. The grace and spirit of obedience is promised to them in these words, *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live* †: And from these expressions, no doubt, St. Stephen, in the new testament, borrowed his stile, when he addressed the same people, *O ye stiff necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, as your fathers have been* ‡. Integrity of life then plainly ap-

* Exod. vi, 12. † Deut. xxx, 6. ‡ Acts vii, 51.

pears, from all these passages, to have been the first and great engagement laid on Abraham, and all his children by their circumcision.

A NEW reflection now remain to be made on this subject, that may be of practical use, and have a reference to the dispensation of the gospel, and its privileges, which succeeded the ancient covenant of the law, with its rites, and limitations. Under that covenant, it is well known, the people of the Jews received from God, according to his will and purpose, peculiar favor: *They were the people of his holiness **, and *Israel was his son, even his first-born †*. The rest of the nations were comparatively, *strangers and foreigners*; nor had they any certain way to obtain the privileges, and assured hopes of God's people; to become *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of this household of God, ‡* but by submitting to circumcision, and *keeping the whole law § of Moses*. That the Apostle calls, *the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile; even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, and to be broken down, for the common benefit of the world ||*; that all the families of the earth might be blessed with faithful Abraham **. And in him, and in his seed, whose prerogative the exclusive adoption once was, it is now the will of God, agreeable to his fore knowledge and promise, that, in the adoption of sons ††, not only the sons of Jacob and Joseph, but also all people, and nations, and languages, should be comprehended; and the glorious liberty, and the title of the children of God, made universal. The new institution of our

* Isaiah, lxiii, 18. † Jer. xi, 3. ‡ Eph. xi, 19.
§ Gal. v, iii. || Eph. xi, 14, 15. ** Gal. iii, 14.
†† Gal. iv, 5.

314 DISSERTATION XX.

Lord and Saviour, who was before Abraham*, and yet is his son, hath superseded the partiality and rigors of a carnal law, by the good-will and grace of a spiritual economy; and declared that, for the future, *there should be neither Jew nor Greek, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised* †, but one Lord and one shepherd. So that all good Christians throughout the earth, are as literally in covenant with God through Jesus Christ, and objects of his protection and blessings, as ever the Jews of old were, in right of their pedigree from Abraham, with whom their covenant was first established; which is the strict and literal meaning of a great many important passages in the New Testament.

THE stipulation of the covenant of grace, now fully revealed, on God's part, is, instead of the increase of the Jewish race, a large accession of converts and kingdoms to the faith of the Messiah; salvation from the dominion of sin, and from the captivity of Satan and death; worse than that of Egypt; guidance through the wilderness of this polluted world; and an entrance, infinitely preferable to a temporal possession in Canaan, into the heavenly Jerusalem, and *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away* ‡; through Jesus the son of God, who excelled, beyond comparison, Abraham, and all other saints and saviours, in the dignity of his nature, which was divine, in his power with God, and also in the extensiveness and perpetuity of his institutions. On our part, we are bound, in obedience to God's authority and commands, to repent of all past offences,

* St. John, viii, 58.

† Gal. iii, 28.

‡ 1 Pet. i, 4.

and

and to exercise faith in the doctrines, and merits of his son, for pardon and acceptance; under the equal and necessary pains of rejection and condemnation. And this is the Christian covenant, in its promises, conditions, and threatenings, through the glorious mediator of it.

NOR was it more necessary, that the people of God of old, should be entered solemnly into their covenant with the God of their fathers, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, than it is under the gospel to be incorporated into the number of God's people: Nor yet that those who were circumcised should keep the law of Moses, than it is still among Christians, to observe and keep all that is required by the covenant, whereof *Jesus is the mediator*, lest they forfeit the privileges of that title, and indeed be cut off from among his people. The rite of our admission is known to be *baptism*; and our duty arising therefrom, it is hoped, is no less known; *Let every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity* *. To which may be only added, by way of information and instruction; that the signs of admission are altered with great propriety, from circumcision in the flesh, to sprinkling with water; to shew that we are the heirs and seed of Abraham, not by a carnal generation, but by a spiritual regeneration; by walking in the steps of his faith, *who is, in that respect, the father of us all*, if we be believers, and servants of God.

THE last thing to be considered is, if the privilege of *children under the gospel*, can be fairly drawn, from the precedent *under the covenant made with Abra-*

* 2 Tim. ii, 19.

hom? The answer is, by another question, that the promise of the new covenant being expressly said to *belong to us and to our children*, without any limitation of age, why should not they all without exception, receive the sign of it, when they are called to partake of the promise itself? especially seeing the infants of the Jews were, by solemn sign, entered into their covenant, when they were as ignorant of the nature and condition of it, as those of Christians are: Nay, even the infants of proselytes to the Jews were, by that very same sign, and by immersion, or washing itself, admitted to the ancient privileges. Hence, supposing the apostles to imitate either of those examples, as they naturally would, unless they were forbidden, which they certainly were not; while they baptised whole families at once, which we know was the case; we cannot question, but they baptised, as the primitive Christians their successors, soon after did, *little children* among the rest; concerning whom our Saviour says, *of such is the kingdom of God*; And St. Paul says, that *they are holy*; which they cannot be reputed, without entering into the gospel covenant: And the only appointed way of entering into it is by *Baptism*; constantly represented by Christ and his apostles as necessary to salvation.

Nor that such converts in ancient times, as were put to death for their faith, before they could be baptised, lost their reward for want of it. Nor that such children of believers now, as die unbaptised by sudden illness, or unexpected accidents, or by neglect itself, which is not their fault, shall forfeit the advantages of baptism. Nay, of the persons themselves who designedly, through mistaken notions, either delay

lay their baptism, as the Anabaptists; or omit it entirely, as the Quakers; even of these it belongs to Christian charity not to judge hardly, as if they must necessarily be excluded from the gospel covenant, if they die unbaptized; but to leave them to the equitable judgment of God. Both of them, indeed, err; the first, through caprice and obstinacy; and the latter especially, through a strange infatuation and blindness, seeing nothing is more plainly enjoined than baptizing with water in the name of the Holy Trinity. But notwithstanding, while they solemnly declare, that they believe in Christ, and desire to obey his commands (the truth of which is open to God only) we can by no means consider them in the same light with total unbelievers.

W But calling *them people foolish and unwise**, it must, at the same time, be declared that they are little better, who observe this ordinance only for form's sake, or perhaps, acknowledging the solemn engagements into which they have entered by this sacrament, live without care to fulfil them. For to no such hypocrisy, or superficial obedience, is God's favor, and eternal happiness promised; seeing he is not a Christian, to change St. Paul's words, *who is one outwardly; neither is this baptism, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly; and baptism is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God* from whom both

Deut. xxii, 6. Rom. ii, 29. And therefore have denied that this distinction could come from God, while others have thought of baptism as a mere outward ceremony.

D-I-S-S-E-R-T-A-T-I-O-N

DISSERTATION XXI

Of ABRAHAM'S Sacrifice; and SARAH'S Death.

GENESIS XXII and XXIII.

WE just now saw Abraham blessed, in the fulfilment of the promise that he should have a son in his old age, who should be the heir of his fortune and of his virtues, and whose posterity should become, in number, like the stars of heaven, and be the peculiar care and favourites of the most high: And now, in the twenty-fifth year of that son's age, before any of the great things spoken of were brought to pass, we see Abraham receiving this strange and alarming command from God, *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.* A command indeed not more strange and severe, than seemingly destructive of the patriarch's expectations, which, he imagined, were founded on the divine faithfulness: And therefore some have denied that this direction could come from God; while others have thought that it was a trial rather of Abraham's discernment, than

that of his dutifulness; and many humble and devout minds feel great reluctance in their affections against this article of sacred history. Now the first opinion being directly levelled against the credit of the scriptures; the second inconsistent with them; and the weakness, and mere impulses of the human frame, giving rise to the scruples of the third sort; we might, agreeable to sound reason, and the word of revelation, which every where bestows unmixed commendations on Abraham's behaviour, shew, distinctly, the possibility of God's giving such an order; the evidence which Abraham had, and we may have now, of his actually giving it; the improbability, that the obedience paid to it should have any bad effect in after-times; and the good ends, that might be, and were, promoted by it. But as these heads have been, in the fullest and most ingenious manner, discussed by a late learned and pious prelate*, it is better to omit them here, than attempt any thoughts that might be new and more elaborate. And the Jewish fables, concerning this event, are not worth the relating.

THE good reasons his grace had for examining those particulars, appear from the attacks that have been made on those several points. For instance, an infidel writer hath expressed himself thus: *The Jewish nation certainly, could never as yet think it unlawful to kill an innocent child, seeing their progenitor would have sacrificed his only son*†. By such sobers, it is easy to distort, and turn into ridicule any matter whatever. And this he thinks he has a right to do

* Dr. Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, vol. iv, ser. xvii.

† Toland. Voltaire, see Jewish Letters, *passim*.

DISSERTATION XXI.

in this place, as it is not said Abraham received the order with any sort of surprise; was reluctant to execute it; or expressed any joy, when a counter-command was signified to him. The unfairness of this way of arguing is evident to every one, who considers that a multitude of circumstances are omitted in all relations, whether they be written or spoken: And there is not the least doubt, that Abraham, as every man must, in the like situation, would be astonished at such a command; would necessarily feel the deepest sorrow; and the highest joy in return; though the sacred historian has drawn a veil over the agitations of his mind, too strong to be described.

A CERTAIN noble Lord has, likewise, censured Abraham severely, *for not expostulating with the Almighty on this occasion; when at another time, says he, he could be so importunate for the pardon of an inhospitable, murdering, impious and incestuous city, meaning Sodom*.* But was this philosopher really sure, that Abraham, in the utmost agony of paternal fondness, did not pray to God to preserve him from illusion and error; and that if it were possible, this cup might pass from him? And yet, when the will of God, so far as he was capable of judging, appeared to be otherwise, was it right or wrong to acquiesce, without farther expostulation? For Sodom, indeed, he did expostulate: But this was only a charitable plea for others; whereas the present affair nearly concerned himself. If Sodom was destroyed, all hope of repentance was cut off from a multitude of vile sinners; if Isaac suffered, it was not as a punishment to him; but as a

* Lord Bolingbroke.

trial of his father's faith which would surely be rewarded in both. And therefore, like the Saviour of the world, who earnestly solicited the salvation of others, Abraham, in the case of Sodom, interceded; and as the same Saviour, like a meek and unrelenting lamb, laid down his life, agreeable to the will of his heavenly father, Abraham, when required to sacrifice his son, obeyed, by the intent of his mind, till the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, *lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*

AFTER the trial and triumph of Abraham's faith and zeal, in the case of his son Isaac, the death and burial of Sarah succeeded. She had been his wife, by a conjecture well supported by a series of facts recorded in their lives, about ninety years. Her whole age was an hundred and twenty-seven; of itself sufficient to account for her death, in a natural and necessary way, without having recourse to doubtful and fabulous relations. Several Jewish writers, however, who set no bounds to their fancy, when commenting on the books of Scripture, say, that the devil, in revenge, for seeing Isaac, by an interposition of the Almighty, preserved to his father, told Sarah that he was actually slain; that, on hearing this, she instantly expired; and Abraham found her dead, at his return from Moriah*.

BUT instead of creating more prodigies than those related in the history of divine providence towards that family, we ought to confine ourselves to the annals of those great operations of that providence, the

* Pirké Eliez. cap. xxii.

knowledge of which God, in his wisdom, has been pleased to transmit to us. As to Sarah, comparing the age at which she bore Isaac, his when he was going to be offered up, and the time of her death, we may certainly conclude, that she lived twelve years after this singular instance of her husband's obedience; and, in the company of so wise and devout a man, would spend that period of her days in repeated acts of grateful homage to her maker and benefactor for all his goodness; and not less for restoring her son from the sacrificing knife, than for giving him to her at the first, when she had despaired of any such blessing. Fulness of years finished her course at length, in expectation of future mercy.

WHEN Sarah died, Abraham, whom God designed to be the proprietor of all the land of Canaan, possessed not so much ground in it as was sufficient to be a place of interment. *Having not yet received the promise, he was only a stranger and foreigner among the men of Hebron.* In his conduct on this occasion, we see how ancient the custom is for every man to desire and provide a *dormitory* for himself, and those with whom he has been nearly connected. So strong is natural sympathy! and constant and universal the care of the mortal body itself, even after dissolution.

DISSERTATION XXII.

Of Eliezer's Journey to Haran, and return with Rebecca.

GENESIS XXIV.

THE death of Sarah naturally turned Abraham's thoughts towards his own dissolution. And, as was before observed, of all his temporal concerns his dear Isaac, Sarah's son, and the son of the promise, occupied his mind most. This tender parent wished to have him married to one, who might prove the sincerest consolation to him, after the recent death of his mother, and divide with him the far greater consternation and trouble, that would necessary follow on that of his father. Abraham must equally provide against Isaac's return into Chaldæa, out of which God had brought him with his family; and against his marrying a Canaanitish woman. He therefore commanded Eliezer, whom he once thought would have been his heir, and whom Moses styles his eldest servant, either because he was highest in dignity, or had been with him the greatest number of years, to seek for his son, a wife in *Haran*, in *Mesopotamia*, in the family of *Nahor*, Isaac's uncle, and Abraham's own brother.

It is true, that to take a wife out of this family was not altogether to avoid being allied with idolaters. But though it was not entirely clear of their impiety and corruption, it was not immerfed so deep in either, as the other people of Chaldaea, or Canaan. This house, like many other, for a generation or two, where good principles have been inculcated, and an useful example fet, had still in it seeds of pure faith, and religion. It cannot be doubted but the danger of idolatry was the principal motive which operated with Abraham in the several precautions he took, for hindering his son from marrying in any of the families of the Canaanites. And that the blood of Gods people should not be incorporated with that of unbelievers, was as unquestionably the cause of so many prohibitions afterwards repeated to the Patriarchs, on the same score. In short, it is not improbable, that the design of all those distinguishing precepts was, to preserve the list of the Messiah's ancestors entire, in the line of the promised seed, from Abraham, to whom the blessing was first intimated, down to his birth. And indeed this is the most reasonable account that can be given of the great exactness the Jews, soon after, observed in this matter, and were encouraged in so doing by the Almighty himself.

ABRAHAM not fully satisfied with exacting a promise of Eliezer, demanded the confirmation of it with an oath; the form of which we have in the second and third verses; *put, I pray thee, said the patriarch, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son, of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell.* The manner of this

this oath, of which there is but one other example, in the forty-seventh chapter of this same book, hath occasioned many disputes among interpreters.

Some have believed that an engagement of this sort was never entered into, but by an inferior to his Lord, who hereby paid an act of homage to his master. While others have said, that it had a reference to the covenant of circumcision, by which the family and posterity of Abraham were allied to the true God; and that they forfeited all the blessings of that covenant, if ever they should prove perfidious in what they had sworn to observe. And there are not a few who have found deep mysteries in those sorts of oaths, and strong marks of the faith of the Patriarchs. *By the God of heaven and the God of the earth*, by whose name the oath was sanctified, many interpreters have understood the Messiah, who was to spring from the father of the faithful, according to the flesh, signified by putting the hand under the thigh.

We may well say of this, as of a thousand other passages in scripture, that if they had been more obscure, and at the same time, more useful and profitable, infinitely less pains would have been taken by commentators to render them clear and practical; as evidently appears in the huge volumes of their writings. And happy would it have been for the word of God, and multitudes of it's readers, if it had always been left to speak it's own sense, without the perverse glosses, which ignorant and partial men have put upon it!

What does it avail us in these ages, that the reason of a custom, which obtained more than three thousand years ago, should be inexorable, being so long exploded

exploded and obsolete? Can we not frankly own our ignorance of the matter, without endangering the reputation of our learning, and skill in the minutiae of antiquity? Surely we may, without any injustice to ourselves or others, if we have but the modesty and self-denial to do it. And after all, according to a learned critic, the whole mystery of putting the hand under the thigh, and swearing in this posture, was the following declaration; *I submit to be pierced through with this weapon (a sword) if ever I shall violate what I now engage to perform.*

BUT to proceed in the story: Eliezer departed from Canaan with ten camels of his master's; after a solemn blessing, and a particular assurance given him, that God would send his angel before him, to prosper him in the way which he went. He arrived at Haran, in Mesopotamia, and standing without the city, prayed thus: *O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: Now therefore let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, let down thy pitcher I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know, that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.* This prayer plainly shews the piety of those remote times, where the knowledge and fear of God were preserved; though it is confessed to be extremely singular in it's tenure, and must be interpreted by the peculiar dispensation the Almighty then followed with good men, in the first ages of the world. It belongs

longs not to any mortal to prescribe to providence any signal, by which we may have evidence before hand, whether our designs will be frustrated, or crowned with success. But yet God, and who can hinder him! shewed such condescension as this, before a written revelation of his will was vouchsafed, to his saints and people, when they were in the way of their duty, or engaged in any eminent services; of which the scriptures furnish us with sundry examples. Superstition, indeed, justly stiled the ghost of substantial religion departed, hath often imitated what hath been rationally practised. Nothing was more common among the Heathens than to require signs, as Eliezer here did, and to regulate their greatest enterprises by presages frequently as ambiguous, as they were imaginary; and, therefore, most commonly, mere deceptions in the end. Thus the Philistines said they would know by the way which the ark took, if the calamity with which they had been afflicted, proceeded from the God of Israel, or from some other cause. Thus also Nebuchadnezzar, in suspense if he should wage war with the Ammonites, or the Jews, took two arrows, upon one of which he inscribed the name of Rabba, the metropolis of the children of Ammon, and on the other the name of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, and having transposed and shuffled them again and again, he drew out one of them at a venture; which happened to have Jerusalem written upon it; and this determined the king of Babylon to make war against Judah. So trifling and uncertain, often, were the circumstances by which men, given up to a superstitious fancy, did, and still do, allow their resolutions to be fixed, and persuade themselves that they are divinely directed.

BUT

But this abuse of providence is no argument against its superintendency in all cases, nor that its operation is unworthy, when humbly implored, and, by a strong dependence, waited for. This was Eliezer's case: He had undertaken the present business at his master's command, of whose piety, and favor with the Almighty, he had seen many proofs before; and, therefore, entertained the fullest confidence, that prosecuting his purpose faithfully, and begging guidance and success from above, he would not fail in his design. And accordingly, the event justified his conduct and expectations: Before he had done speaking, that is, before he had finished the prayer repeated above, God heard him, and ordered it, that a damsel *very fair* and beautiful, should immediately come out of the city of Haran, carrying a pitcher upon her shoulder. This was, in fact, the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, Abraham's own brother. Her name was Rebecca; and this whole chapter gives such a favourable representation of her person, her benevolence, and other good dispositions, as prognosticates before hand how happy she would make the husband, for whom, by a sovereign appointment, she was manifestly designed; and how deserving she was of the honorable alliance with the chosen family of God.

WHEN Rebecca met Eliezer, she was going to fetch water for the family, an occupation, together with keeping flocks and herds of cattle, which, to our astonishment, the simplicity of the first ages, assigned to women of the most distinguished quality; of which we have innumerable examples in sacred history itself, as well as profane; particularly in the case of the
seven

seven daughters of *Ruel*, prince and priest of Midian, whom Moses defended from the shepherds of the desert, and assisted in their rural toil. And could we, in these days of pride and effeminacy, divest ourselves of prejudices in favor of our own way of living, we should certainly love, and long after, the enchanting country scenes which the book of Genesis, perhaps the oldest in the world, exhibits to us; so conducive to innocent pleasures, good health, and that longevity for which those ages were so remarkable. Eliezer now began to make trial, whether this blooming damsel who came out from the city first, was she whom God had ordained for his master, by requesting of her a little water, in that country extremely comfortable and precious, that her compliance or refusal might serve as a sign to him. He soon knew how it was to fare with him, by her humane and hospitable answer; *drink my Lord, said she, and I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.* In gratitude for this amiable kindness, Abraham's servant presented Rebecca with a gold ring, and two bracelets, of considerable weight and value. Here again our commentators, with great pains, enquire if this ring was really for the ear, as is here said, or if it was a jewel for the forehead, after the eastern fashion; and if Eliezer gave her any more than one. They have also industriously searched for the weight, value, and nature of the bracelets. These things we barely mention on purpose, to shew readers how some learned men have been employed in explaining the scripture.

Would not such men blush, were they to swell their writings with a description of the ornaments now in

in use? And yet they swell them with the exactest descriptions of those of the most distant ages.

THIS courteous damsel accepted Eliezer's present, and offered him lodging, and every sort of accommodation for his beasts, in the house of her father Bethuel. She ran thither before him, and related to her brother Laban every thing that had happened. As in the narrative, which is very long, and the incidents various, there is but once mention made of Bethuel, Rebecca's father, and as Laban appears to have directed every thing concerning the marriage of his sister, it seems evident that their father was now in extreme old age. Josephus, in the first book of the Jewish antiquities*, says that he was dead, which is directly contrary to the account of Moses, who hath expressly told us at the fiftieth verse of this chapter, that Laban and Bethuel said, *the thing proceedeth from the Lord*. Josephus, to observe it by the bye, is perhaps one of the most unfaithful guides that can be followed, in some passages of the holy scriptures, being shamefully negligent, as would appear, in the study of several parts of them, and very fanciful and partial in others. The apology offered for him is, that he had seen a copy of the Hebrew books, different from the present ones, and at least very near agreeing with the Septuagint.†.

LABAN having heard the relation of his sister, and possessing fully her generosity and benevolence, went to meet Eliezer, and brought him to his own house, where his camels were put up, water provided for

* Cap. 16.

† Shuckford's Con. B. 1. p. 60.

him and his attendants, and meat set before them for their refreshment. But this faithful servant, intent on the business entrusted to him, and which he considered as his chief duty at that time, would taste no provisions till he had set forth the design of his journey to Rebecca, and her family. It was easy to perceive by his recital as he went along, the direction of providence in the whole affair. Rebecca was consulted; and consented without difficulty, to a marriage which she could not but consider as the most happy event of her life; and instantly to follow a man charged with so important a negotiation. Eliezer then distributed in Rebecca's family the rich presents Abraham had sent; and the marriage was celebrated by festivity and rejoicing. He was pressed to spend some time in Mesopotamia, with this fair damsel, before he returned to his master for the connubial consummation. But he resisted the importunities, and forthwith departed with her, and her nurse, to deliver to Isaac the most precious gift of an accomplished spouse.

REBECCA and Eliezer arrived in the land of Canaan, between Kadesh and Bered, while Isaac was in the fields, at the even-tide, praying or meditating, near the well *Lahai-roi*, which the angel had shewn to Hagar, when she was dying with thirst. Isaac knew Eliezer, who acquainted him who Rebecca was, and at the same time informed Rebecca that this was Isaac, his master's son. Then she lighted off the camel, prostrated herself before Isaac, and took a vail and covered herself; or a kind of mantle, after the manner of all the Arabian women on many occasions: And thus covering herself, she testified at once, according to the custom of her country, her modesty and submission,

on, two virtues most becoming the married state, and to which she was just now going to enter.

Thus have we gone through the history of this chapter, and interspersed such remarks and reflections as the subject naturally suggested. And now, in conclusion, we ought certainly to renew the reflection, which, on like occasions, hath been often made, namely, that as the holy scriptures, in every part of them, have God for their author, and were intended for mens instruction and improvement in all ages, so do they most conspicuously contain the history of his providence in the management of human affairs, particularly such as concerned his own people, who were more immediately under his protection, and the objects of his care and blessing. No book in the world ascribes the chain of causes, and their ultimate effects, so uniformly to an overruling power, as this book does; in which we see the Almighty represented as the first mover, conductor, and finisher, of almost every transaction; thereby strongly impressing our minds with a sense, which we would otherwise be but too apt to lose, of our dependence on him for wisdom, direction, and a favorable issue in all our doings; who can with equal ease cross and defeat our purposes, and facilitate and bless the execution of them. Even in this marriage of Isaac, we visibly see a divine hand engaged; by which the whole train of it's circumstances seem to have been adjusted. And there is no doubt, though the operations of providence are not now so manifest as formerly, that it is equally active, and in the very same matters, when men prepare themselves for, and submit to it's agency. And therefore in the article of marriage itself, as well as in all other

DISSERTATION XXIII

Of the Death and Burial of ABRAHAM.

GENESIS XXV, 7, 8, 9, 10.

OF this great man, every part of whose life was so singularly venerable and instructive, this passage exhibits the dissolution and interment. *Abraham gave up the ghost, and died, and was buried.* We may not, perhaps, be much affected at first with these expressions, seeing they only represent a condition to which he, in common with all mankind, by a penal unrepalable law of God, was obliged to submit. He died at the age of *an hundred and seventy-five*. His children, with filial piety, conveyed his body to the cave of Macpela, the only spot of ground that then belonged to him, as an inheritance, in the land of Canaan, and placed it close by Sarah's remains, there deposited eight and thirty years before; where, mingling together, they lie to this day, notwithstanding the ravages of time, and the devastations of invaders.

AND

AND yet this event of Abraham's death, suggests very serious and important reflections. He, whose body was thus laid in the earth, and is now reduced to ashes, was *the friend of God*; and had the promise from him, *I will be thy friend, and thy exceeding great reward*. This promise, it is true, was verified in part, in the constant protection afforded him, and the temporal prosperity with which he was blessed: And it is not denied, that worldly security and happiness were, chiefly, the stipulated rewards of the covenant made with him. But can we possibly believe, that the land of Canaan, flowing as it was with milk and honey, was ALL included in this promise, made by the mouth of God himself, *to whom the earth and the fulness thereof belongs* *. In his sight, of what value are a few bulls, and goats, and sheep?—A few acres of land, or a whole kingdom? And shall a few years possession exhaust his liberality and munificence?

IT is granted that Abraham was only a man; with all his excellent virtues, a sinner; could claim no reward, properly speaking, for his labours and sufferings; nor exemption from death, the wages of iniquity, for the slightest instance. But he was the father of the faithful, an example of strong belief and right action to succeeding ages. At the divine command, he abandoned his property, kindred and country, and believed incredible things. In obedience to the same command, though under the heaviest anguish of heart, he built an altar, on which he was to slay his son, *his only son*, the source of his hope, his power and greatness; bound him with cords; took

* Psalm xxiv, 1.

the knife, stretched forth his hand, and would have offered him in sacrifice, if the Almighty, when that of his mind was fully made, had not interposed. After this, is it possible, we may again ask, that temporary and terrestrial privileges, such as many of the most worthless men enjoy, should be all that was intended for this *good and faithful servant of God*? Or that he expected and wished for? God was certainly pleased with him, as he was with Enoch, translated immediately to heaven, and is, at all times, abundantly able and bountiful to make all the righteous happy for ever.

BESIDES, the very promise itself made to Abraham, of putting him into the possession of Canaan was not accomplished, if we understand it literally. He had indeed great riches, but his life was so full of great afflictions, that, in no period of it, can we find that promise, in any measure, fulfilled. *He sojourned only, saith St. Paul, in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise*; who thereby declared, that they expected a better, than that which had been promised to them on the earth, *even an heavenly*.

It is not to be doubted, that not only Abraham, but likewise all the religious men of his time, as well as of the preceding and subsequent ages, entertained the faith and hope of a future state. This has been the belief of all nations from time immemorial; and it is scarcely credible in the nature of things, that the greatest happiness of the present life, which might at any time, and would infallibly at length be totally destroyed, should ever become a solid principle of religion;

ligion; or be proposed by the Almighty as the sole reward of piety and goodness.

THESE, indeed, were the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and ten years; then he gave up the ghost; and his son's, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Macpela. Such circumstances of holy scripture we cannot too well remark. For the great promises made to Abraham, the conquests he should obtain; the country of which he was to be the sovereign; and the possession to be confirmed to him and to his posterity, all ended, with respect to him, in the grave. But are all the promises of God, under former dispensations, to be interpreted in this manner? In this manner were they all fulfilled? Or rather from such difficulties, are we not to draw convincing proofs of the immortality of the soul, and of the resurrection of the body? *I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob**, is a well known declaration in the books of revelation. This must have a reference to a state beyond death, and the worms and putrefaction of a sepulchre. Our Lord's doctrine will, therefore, be one day verified, by the immortality of Abraham's soul, and the resurrection of his body, that *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*†.

THOSE who allow the immortality of Abraham's soul necessary, upon the foregoing reasoning, will not perhaps, think the resurrection of his body an equally necessary consequence. It has been said, that the soul being the seat and sole residence of happiness, of which the body, in it's own nature, is incapable,

* St. Matthew xxii, 32. † *ibid.*

God might have fulfilled his promise to the utmost, in bestowing on Abraham's soul, all the happiness of which it was susceptible, without raising his body out of the earth, which could contribute nothing to it.

THE objection plausibly gains upon us, because it asserts the real dignity of man; and teaches us, that the noblest and most sublime part of our nature is not material flesh, which constitutes a part of our being, but the soul, which raises us to a level with pure intelligences, not clothed with mortal bodies.

YET by an established law, in regard to our natures, both seem to be necessary, in order to our happiness. Men are composed of matter as well as of spirit; and he who made us hath so adjusted those two substances, that the one should not have full enjoyment and satisfaction, without the participation of the other. Hence we may presume, that whatever happiness we may enjoy, in the interval between death and the resurrection, and how far soever this happiness may exceed any that we can have on the earth, it will not be till after the union of the soul and body, that our happiness will be completed. And on this account many passages of scripture refer our perfection to that period: *As for me, says the psalmist, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness, when I awake**: And when Christ, says St. Paul, *who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory; and there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day*: And, finally, *beloved, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that*

when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Happiness, therefore, we may, and undoubtedly will enjoy, when body and soul are separate, but not have it consummated till after their reunion. Hence the promise of an *exceeding great reward* suitable to Abraham's compleat nature, equally supposes his soul to be immortal, and that his body shall be raised from the earth: The point here intended to be proved.

DISSERTATION XXIV.

Isaac deceived by *Rebecca* and *Jacob*, who obtains the Blessing.

GENESIS XXVII.

ISAAC, perceiving the end of his course approaching, having already lost the use of sight, wished to give the patriarchal benediction to his family. The benedictions of those extraordinary men ought not to be simply considered, as the effusions of an affectionate and good mind, which is filled with impotent wishes, and expresses rather what it desires should happen, than what is probable ever will. They were, in those days when the will of God was first unfolding, prophetic oracles, which marked out infallible events, and penetrated into the most distant futurity.

THE Patriarch on this important day, which was to decide the destiny of his children, paid too little attention to what had been formerly foretold concerning *Esau* and *Jacob*; perhaps indeed he had never rightly comprehended it. At the twenty-third verse
of

of the twenty-fifth chapter, we are informed, *it was said to Rebecca, before they were born, two manner of people and two nations shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.* Following, in the act he was going to perform, no other guide than the emotions of his own heart, he purposed to give the eldest of his sons, a token of that predilection which he had always entertained for him. It is much better to tax the Patriarch here, with want of attention and understanding, than with rebellion of heart, and an obstinate resistance of what had been before determined. However this was, we see he ordered *Esau to bring him venison which his soul loved*, that having taken some sustenance before a discourse which he could not pronounce without a conflict, he might, with the more composure and deliberation, attend to the oracles he was going to declare.

BUT Rebecca, whom tenderness for Jacob rendered vigilant and industrious, informed him of the command that Esau had received from his father. She represented to him the glorious consequences of the benediction, which his rival-brother would derive, provided it was bestowed on him; and in order to prevent it, instructed Jacob to present immediately to Isaac the nicest parts of two young kids of the goats, after dressing them in the best manner, to make them pass, with the unsuspecting old man, for venison. Jacob felt at first some reluctance to execute this device. He suggested to his mother, that if his father discovered the fraud, he would severely punish him or her, who was the author of it, and denounce against them both maledictions, instead of blessings, which they

they expected. Rebecca answered, that all the effects of that malediction, if any followed, should fall upon herself. Jacob replied, that though his father had lost all his delicacy of taste, to distinguish the flesh of a kid from that of some beast taken in the chase, yet at least he could not mistake when he touched his hands smooth and soft, in place of those of Esau his brother, which were all over hairy. Rebecca promised to remedy even this inconvenience, and, in fact, executed her promise, as soon as Jacob yielded to her solicitations. *She put on the hands of her younger son, skins of the goats, and on the smooth of his neck; and took the goodly raiment of the eldest, and clothed Jacob with it.* Here, says a certain author, the Rabbins have given the freest scope to their reveries. They assert that this goodly raiment was the same that God had given our first parents, immediately after the fall; that Nimrod, the first Emperor, had made it his royal apparel; that it had come down even to *Esau*; and possessed the virtue of taming, and rendering tractable, the fiercest beasts.

But instead of such extravagant and groundless fancies, it would be a great deal more pertinent to remark, how fertile in expedients the human mind is to surmount difficulties, when it is effectually engaged in the pursuit of favorite purposes; and particularly female imagination in the management of an intricate and curious affair; as this, and other instances, evidently prove.

In effect, Rebecca's stratagem succeeded; and as Jacob's words to his father on this occasion, must either exculpate him of falshood, or fix the guilt on him

him, according to the different senses that are ascribed to them, they have been explained both ways, as interpreters have had less or more reluctance to charge the Patriarch with it, or to acquit him. The original is most literally translated, and signifies word for word, that Isaac having asked Jacob, *who art thou my son?* Jacob said unto his father, *I am Esau thy first-born; and have done according as thou badst me, sit and eat of my venison, that thou mayest bless me.* That Isaac having said, *how is it that thou hast found it so quickly my son?* he said, *the Lord thy God brought it to me.* That Isaac, having felt his hands, and found them hairy, said, *the hands indeed are the hands of Esau, but the voice is that of Jacob.* That he questioned Jacob a second time, *art thou my very son Esau?* and Jacob said, *I am.* Now, it is inconceivable, how any one examining these words, without any other design than to get the sense of them, can be in the least at a loss to see in all these speeches of Jacob a train of declarations opposite to the truth.

SOME indeed paraphrase the first words in this account thus: *I am, he who brings thee venison to eat; Esau is thy eldest son.** Other interpreters understand them in this manner; *I am Esau*, that is to say, *I have taken his place, because he sold me his birth-right.* As also this sense has been put upon them; *I am Jacob to whom thou now speakest; but Esau is thy first-born.* One of the fathers adopts this reading; *I am Esau by right†*; and pretends that it is a figure, like that in the gospel, where John the Baptist is called *Elias*. Mental reservations have been recurred to, in this perplexing case of Ja-

R. Jarchi in Genesis xxvii.

† St. August. contra mendacium.

cob. But all these ways of justifying him only shew, how hard pressed interpreters have been in the attempt, and how strong and conclusive Moses's words are, which impute falsehood to him. The fraud was implous! For what does not a wife owe to her husband, in so critical a situation! What does not a son owe to his aged parent! What does not one brother owe to another, in point of justice and affection. And we may frankly own that Rebecca was very criminal in seducing her son by such pernicious counsel; that Jacob was not less so in allowing himself to be practised on, in such an affair; that both seem to have imagined that a complication of frauds was necessary for the accomplishment of a divine decree. It, nevertheless, appears, that God, always less ready to punish than to manifest his favor, confirmed the paternal and patriarchal benediction of which Jacob's craft and extortion, in procuring it in this manner, rendered him unworthy.

If what has been said appears unsatisfactory in regard to so venerable a character as Jacob's, we may then be allowed to profess our ignorance about the matter; as well as about many other things; and it is certainly better to make this declaration once for all, than to give, for a clear and full solution, so many vain conjectures as interpreters have done, upon this and other puzzling passages of scripture.

BUT we return to the history. Isaac, deceived by his own sense of feeling, through the imposition put upon it, and by so many assurances made to him by Jacob, pronounced on the youngest of his two sons, the benediction he had reserved for the other. The
form

form of it is solemn: *Come near now, and kiss me, my son: And God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesteth thee.* In this form, the Patriarch wishes, or rather as was said, promises prophetically to Jacob, that rich and fructifying dew which fell so abundantly in Palæstine, and supplied the defect of rain, which they ordinarily had but twice a year; in the month of April, when it was called the former rain, and October, when it was called the latter rain; of which we read in a great many places of the old testament. He promised him also a great abundance of the fruits, and other productions of the ground; which his posterity had in that land almost beyond belief; and especially the superiority and pre-eminence of his brethren; the inhabitants of the nations surrounding Canaan.

AND it came to pass, we are told at the thirteenth verse, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from his presence, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting, and presented venison to his father; who exclaimed immediately for the delusion that had been put upon him; and as Esau pressed him by words, sighs and tears, to give him the blessing, Isaac still increased his anguish in telling him that he had already given it to his brother. Esau then expostulated; *Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?* It is surprizing that the Patriarch did not recall the blessing, and give it to him who was so dear, and for whom he had designed it. The Jews, it seems,

seems, entertain a notion that he saw Hell open before him; and that the frightfulness of the object hindered him from pronouncing predictions contrary to the purposes of heaven. The thought, in all likelihood, is chimerical; but we must at least suppose that some supernatural interposition regulated Isaac's mind. Some interpreters lay great stress on these words used by Moses, *Isaac trembled very exceedingly*; which they translate, *Isaac was absorbed in an ecstasy*.

HOWEVER, to indemnify Esau in part, who to the full could not be indemnified, and to give him a large share of wealth and prosperity, though he could be no longer considered as his eldest son, Isaac gave him a blessing also. It is observable, that it is also expressed in a manner, which seems to contradict his refusal of granting him one of the same kind with that he had given Jacob; for he said to Esau, almost in the same stile that he had spoken to Jacob, *Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above*. Fact and experience not having confirmed this prophetic oracle, Esau having dwelt in Idumea, which is a dry and barren country, a learned critic, well known in Europe*, presumes that Isaac's words ought to be thus interpreted, *Thou shalt indeed be deprived of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; but by thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy brother, and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck*. But those who are of a different opinion pretend, that this

* M. Saurin.

first part of the oracle was sufficiently verified, even in the literal sense, by that abundance of worldly goods which Esau possessed. They add, that Isaac's refusal, at Esau's first coming in, respected only that part of the blessing which constituted Jacob superior to his brethren, and not the good things of another kind which were promised, and afterwards bestowed on him.

WHAT the other part of the verse predicted to Esau, and his posterity, that they should be an enterprizing and warlike people, the event proved to be true; as we read in Josephus, and have several traces in the prophets, that the Idumeans, or Edomites, who were all the descendants of Esau, lived by the inroads they made on neighbouring territories, and by rapine, and extortions on those who travelled among them.

THE verse last repeated deserves a remark and illustration; *Thou shalt serve thy brother, and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck, &c.* This state of national affairs, when Jacob for some time should enslave Esau, and he in his turn free himself from the dominion of his brother, may be more clearly perceived among their descendants. For first we read that *David put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons; and all they of Edom became David's servants*.¹ And then again we see that those same Idumeans, who had been subjected by the Jews in the days of David, revolted from them in

¹ 2 Sam. viii, 14.

*the reign of Joram**; and maintained their freedom eight hundred years, even till the famous *Hircan*, the conqueror of Samaria, and destroyer of the temple there, subdued them. They subdued the Jews in some sort, a second time in their turn. This was while Herod the Idumean reigned over them, and the posterity of that foreign prince held the sovereignty of Canaan during an age and an half. The truth is, if we stop at particular instances we shall find great difficulty in comprehending, wherein that pre-eminence and superiority, which was promised to Jacob over Esau, consisted; and therefore must own that it is only by giving the words a general signification, that we can find in them a meaning worthy of that infallible spirit from which they flowed; and dictated them to the dying patriarch.

Thus we have finished this famous piece of sacred history, in the Old Testament; and of which there is so much notice taken, and use made, by St. Paul, in the New. It lets us see, that, amidst all the passions and designs of mortals, the purpose of God, according to his will, shall stand in the decrees and events of his providence. *The elder shall serve the younger; For Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, when not being yet born, they had neither done any good or evil. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God! God forbid!* It is only in his appointments about the perishing distinctions and possessions of this world, that he acts in this sovereign manner, leaving every man free to improve himself, and the grace he

† 2 Kings, viii, 20.

receives,

receives, so as to secure his eternal happiness in the world to come. *Let us all fear him, and his judgments, and endeavour, by all possible means, to please him, and keep ourselves in his love.*

DISSERTATION XXV.

Of the nature and extent of the Christian's duty, and the manner of its performance.

The Christian's duty is twofold: first, to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love his neighbour as himself. This duty is the foundation of all Christian conduct, and is the only way to eternal life.

The Christian's duty is also twofold: first, to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love his neighbour as himself. This duty is the foundation of all Christian conduct, and is the only way to eternal life.

The Christian's duty is also twofold: first, to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love his neighbour as himself. This duty is the foundation of all Christian conduct, and is the only way to eternal life.

The Christian's duty is also twofold: first, to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love his neighbour as himself. This duty is the foundation of all Christian conduct, and is the only way to eternal life.

The Christian's duty is also twofold: first, to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love his neighbour as himself. This duty is the foundation of all Christian conduct, and is the only way to eternal life.

The Christian's duty is also twofold: first, to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love his neighbour as himself. This duty is the foundation of all Christian conduct, and is the only way to eternal life.

The Christian's duty is also twofold: first, to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength; and secondly, to love his neighbour as himself. This duty is the foundation of all Christian conduct, and is the only way to eternal life.

DISSERTATION XXV.

Of *Jacob's* Journey to Haran, and Servitude there.

GENESIS XXVIII, &c.

NOT reckoning it sufficient to have bestowed his blessing as in the foregoing chapter, on his beloved son Jacob, Isaac added to it several advices and exhortations. He charged him especially, not to defile himself by marrying a pagan woman, but to form an alliance with the house of Laban, his mother's brother, who dwelt at Haran in Mesopotamia: On this condition appears in a great measure to have rested the fulfillment of the benedictions which he had pronounced. Jacob obeyed; and not expecting to receive the promises, without performing the condition to which they were annexed, he prepared himself immediately to execute his father's commands.

His departure for Haran, the vision he had on the way, the incidents that befell him at his arrival, and during his stay in that place, together with his return
to

to his father in the land of Canaan, and the conflict he had with the angel, before he met his brother Esau, are all described in this, and the four following chapters, which we shall consider jointly, that we may abridge the history.

JACOB went out from Beersheba; and it is not a little surprising, that he who was Rebecca's favorite, the heir of a powerful family, and as it were already at the head of it, should undertake such a journey alone, and, as he says himself, in the thirty-second chapter, *with a staff in his hand*. It was, according to computation, four hundred and fifty miles; the dangers of which he encountered without the company of a single domestic. But the sacred historian seems to account for this strange circumstance: For after having related Isaac's commands, and the object of Jacob's peregrination, he adds, *Esau saw all these things*; and this would certainly suggest to him an apprehension, that his jealous and disappointed brother, might execute a design which he might have formed of killing him; and that secrecy and haste were prudent and necessary.

JACOB came as far as Luz, a pagan town, and afterwards one of the southern frontiers of the tribe of Benjamin. Instead of going into it, either because the inhabitants were idolaters, or he was doubtful of their hospitality, *he took of the stones of a certain place, upon which he lighted, after the sun was set, and put them for his pillows, and lay down to sleep*. Another striking picture, and undeniable proof, of the simplicity of the primitive ages. But a good man is never defenceless

or

or alone, in the silence of night, or the solitude of the least frequented deserts, any more than in the meridian splendors, or the most populous cities, having his God and master to accompany and protect him. Accordingly he had, in a dream, a miraculous communication from the Almighty, frequently vouchsafed to ancient believers, in the same manner. He saw the resemblance of a ladder, set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And above it stood the divine majesty, repeating to his servant the promises formerly made to his grand-father *Abraham*.

By this image, it is evident, that God designed to assure Jacob of his protection, and that he should have all the assistance he stood in need of in his present circumstances. The Patriarch was alone in a wide waste; dreading the resentment of his brother; and laying the plan of a marriage: God shews him innumerable hosts of heavenly beings, who surround and watch over him, and promises him a posterity as the dust of the earth in number, that should spread abroad into all quarters of the world. That ladder then, and the intercourse carried on by means of it, is to be considered as an expressive emblem, of a general providential direction over mankind; especially of the particular care which God takes of his servants.

SOME interpreters * have thought that it was a figurative representation of our Lords incarnation, and of the gracious administration of human affairs now conducted by him: And a passage in one of the gos-

* M. Saurin, p. 387.

pels seems to encourage such a thought, where our Saviour himself says, *hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man**, or by his will and orders; when things in heaven and earth shall be subject to his command, for the divine glory, and the benefit of mankind.

JACOB, deeply impressed, perhaps agitated, with the dream, awakening, cried, *surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not! How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!* And he said this, it is not unlikely, as the three disciples did, when they saw our redeemer's transfiguration; *Lord, let us make here three tabernacles, not knowing what to say.* Of such a distinguished favor, however, he determined to leave a memorial, where he had received it. For this reason he changed the name of *Luz* into *Bethel*, that is, the house of God. He fixed in the earth the stone on which his head had lain, as a monument of this divine intercourse; and anointed it with oil, in token of it's consecration to that sacred use; adding withal a vow, that if God would be with him, and keep him in the way that he went, and give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that he came again to his father's house in peace, then should the Lord be his God; and of all that he gave him, he would surely devote the tenth to his service †.

ENCOURAGED by so many promises, he continued his journey, and arrived safe in Laban's family. This man had two daughters, *Leah* and *Rachel*, whom the sacred text describes, and informs us that the lat-

* St. John, 1, 57.

† A certain noble author says, *this is an interested and craving vow.* But is it any more than a thankful acknowledgment for what Jacob had received; and of humble dependence for what he expected?

ter of them strongly captivated Jacob's heart. But Laban, unfeeling and sordid, far from embracing the opportunity of forming an alliance, of which virtue and affection would have been the bands, determined to make Jacob's inclinations towards his daughter subservient to his own avarice. It was customary, indeed, among the ancients to demand of every man a certain dowry for his bride, or her relations. Laban exacted seven years service; to which Jacob consented; *and they seemed unto him a few days only, for the love he had to Rachel.*

THIS term being expired, he demanded his reward; and Laban carefully avoided every objection, that he might ensnare Jacob the more effectually. Gathering together all the people of his community, he made a marriage feast; but substituted Leah in Rachel's place. Such a piece of deceit could be easily practised in those days, when the nuptial chamber was almost dark; and the bride closely veiled, when she approached her husband's bed. Every one, who understands Latin itself, knows, that the word *nabere* to marry, signified originally *to veil*: And Jacob's heart and imagination being wholly set upon Rachel, he was entirely unsuspecting, and thought of nothing but her.

BUT in proportion to the grossness of the imposition put upon him, was the vehemence of his resentment. Laban, in his own excuse, pleaded propriety and custom, which declared against the marriage of a younger daughter before an elder. And to convince Jacob that this was the sole motive, Laban assured him that, for the same service of other seven years, he should

should have Rachel also. Which was accordingly performed, and the prize bestowed upon him.

To modern readers, it will, no doubt, sound strange that Jacob should have had two wives at the same time, and those wives sisters, who do not consider, that, in the Patriarchal age and dispensation, God had not declared his will so fully, concerning either Polygamy, Concubinage, or the just degrees of consanguinity, as he hath been pleased to do now; and yet, after that will has been declared, his authority, in all such matters, is of equal force with any other positive law, or as if the law had been from the beginning.

IN this country of Mesopotamia, were born, besides Dinah, eleven sons to Jacob, *six* by *Leah*, *two* by *Bilhab* one of the handmaids, *two* by *Zilpah* the other of them, and *one* by *Rachel*, namely *Joseph*; for *Benjamin* was not born till after his father's return to Canaan. Those men are generally distinguished by the name of *the twelve Patriarchs*, from whom the whole Jewish nation, by a miraculous multiplication, agreeable to the promise of the most high, descended, and was in less than three hundred years afterward so exceedingly populous.

DURING all this period of service, it would appear, that, besides the two daughters, no other wages were allowed to Jacob, for his labour and fidelity in his father-in-law's family. Wherefore God, who proceeds not always, in such acts, as a sovereign ruler, but likewise as a righteous judge, communicated to Jacob, in a dream, the knowledge of an expedient, which should amply indemnify his loss, and make a large

share of Laban's wealth his own. The first thing to be done was to procure an agreement, that *all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown amongst the sheep, and all the speckled and spotted among the goats, should be his hire.* He was, next, *to take rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree, and pill white strakes in them, and set them before the flocks when they came to drink, AND WERE CONCEIVING.* The effect was, Jacob's flocks and herds increased exceedingly.

HERE two difficulties occur, and are often urged. One is, if Jacob's stratagem was lawful; and the other, whether those flocks and herds became spotted by a natural process, or an extraordinary and miraculous appointment. As to the first question, there can be no doubt of the lawfulness of the Patriarch's conduct, seeing it was directed by God himself, who has *the property of cattle on a thousand hills**, and might, in this manner, correct Laban, for deceiving and injuring his son-in-law, as well as, by adverse appointments in his providence, destroy those cattle before his eyes. In regard to the other question, we may assert that, in all probability, the phenomenon may be accounted for in an ordinary way: For if God had been pleased to work a miracle, it is hardly to be imagined that he would have instructed Jacob, for the accomplishment of his purpose, in a natural experiment†. And both interpreters and philosophers produce examples and proofs, beyond number, of the

* Psalm l. 10. † Though in some instances miracles have been wrought when means have been employed; yet, for the most part, they have been performed, unaccompanied by any apparatus whatever.

power which the imagination of mothers has upon the *Fœtus*, immediately after it's production.

BE this as it may, Laban beheld Jacob's prosperity with impatience. And his sons, far from endeavouring to reclaim their father from his injustice and covetousness, did all that they could to excite both: *This stranger*, they said, *was come to take away all their glory*, which, in the sacred language, signifies their *riches*. Jacob soon perceived that he had fallen into disgrace with Laban, and his family, and resolved to leave it by stealth, as he was afraid to do it openly. He imparted to his wives the design, and the motives of it, who readily acquiesced, and complained of their father in their turn. Under every difficulty he accordingly fled, with two wives, two concubines, twelve children, a great number of men, and of maid servants, of slaves and cattle. But the feast of sheep-shearing, which Laban celebrated with his sons, at the distance of three days journey, was favorable to them. Rachel, at her departure, stole her father's gods. The word for them in the original is *Teraphim*, which signifies responsors or publishers. The reason of the name, the figure of the images, the manner of consulting them, and of receiving their answer, have opened a vast field for the enquiries of the learned, without any advantage to mankind at this time*. Particulars of this sort, though within the compass of the sacred writings, can as little concern us, who are better instructed in regard to the object of our worship, as the

* Those images had the figure of a man, and were the *penates* in those days. For a full account of them, see Godwin's Aaron and Moses, book iv. chap. ix.

notions of an American Indian when he invokes *Yahoo*; or of the most ignorant Papists when they pay their *congees* to the niched images of a Romish temple. Laban being addicted to idolatry, which is the offspring of ignorance and fancy, he might, on different occasions, and as his purpose required, use his *Tetraphim* as he pleased. There are many commentators, who imagine Rachel stole them only for the value of their composition, viz. Gold, adorned, perhaps, with precious stones. Therefore,

WE find, as might be expected, Laban had no sooner learned that Jacob had left his service, with all the wealth he had lately acquired in it, than he pursued him, under all the emotions of a covetous and avaritious man, despoiled of his treasure. *But when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him, says Solomon**. Accordingly he appeared in a dream to Laban, and gave him a charge concerning Jacob, to do him and his family no harm. And the consequence was, after some altercation, that though the one had it in his power to use violence, and the other good cause of dissatisfaction and complaint, they both *made a covenant before the Lord, by erecting an heap of stones, and eating thereon*, a mark of reconciliation and friendship, *that they should never pass that heap to do one another any injury. And early next morning, Laban kissed his daughters, and their sons, and blessed them, and departed, and returned unto his place.* Thus was Jacob happily delivered from his present fears.

* Prov. xvi. 7.

BUT, as has been often remarked, though the Patriarchs were the most tender objects of the Almighty's love, they were not free from troublesome and cross incidents in life. God thereby designed to elevate their minds above terrestrial things, and their expectations to heaven, where all his magnificent promises were to be fulfilled. Hence it was, that Jacob had no sooner escaped from one formidable enemy, than he saw himself threatened by another, still more powerful and unrelenting. No length of time, it is often found, proscribes hatred and revenge; though it dissolve marble and rocks, it often leaves a vindictive heart unpenetrated. Indeed it was not to be expected that even fifteen or sixteen years, which Jacob had passed in Mesopotamia, could extinguish Esau's wrath against him; they could only suspend it.

SUCH reflections were revolving in Jacob's mind, when *the angels of God met him like an host*, confirming the saying of an holy man, seven or eight hundred years after this apparition; *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them* *. The same God who shewed Jacob, when he was going into Mesopotamia, angels ascending and descending upon a ladder, to assure him of their protection and assistance in his journey, made those same spiritual beings appear, to support him, by their presence, against what he had to fear at his return. And thus was fulfilled the promise made to him at Bethel, *Behold I will be with thee, and keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and bring thee again into this land.*

Psalm xxxiv. 7.

WHEN

WHEN the best disposition of his family and substance was made for meeting Esau, to procure his favor, and to save, if possible, Rachel and Joseph, Jacob's dearest pledges, night came on; and the Patriarch being left alone, *there wrestled an angel with him in the form of a man, until the breaking of the day.* Whether this wrestling was real, or only a simple vision in a dream, as the ladder was, cannot positively be determined; though many have ventured to affirm both ways. Either of them we may safely chuse; for in either we will find the design answered; which was to comfort Jacob, and assure him of the blessing the Almighty had in reserve for him. *And he called the name of that place Peniel, for, said he, I have seen God face to face.*

IN this sketch of the Patriarch's history, during the term mentioned, every reader must have perceived affecting and edifying events; this lesson, especially, is obvious, that a divine providence presides over the minutest affairs of life; and that much more ought to be ascribed to it's agency, than we, in these days, seem to imagine or believe: Good men of old reduced every occurrence to it's operations; and their pious example ought always to be imitated.

DISSERTATION XXVI.

Of *Jacob's Love for Joseph; and his Brethren's Hatred.*

GENESIS XXVIII, &c.

BY way of preparation for the following discourse, nothing more is necessary, than to inform, or rather remind readers of what they already know; that while Jacob was on the road to Hebron, and not far from his father, *Rachel*, from the beginning the sovereign mistress of his heart, travelled, and had hard labour, and as soon as she was delivered of Benjamin, died*.

THUS is ascertained, with an historical exactness, the birth of the twelve Patriarchs, whose names and descents are so often mentioned in the books of the old testament.

THE first thing to be observed in this chapter is, that *Jacob settled in the land wherein his father was a*

* Gen. xxiv, 16.

stranger,

stranger, in the land of Canaan. Here *Israel*, for into this name had Jacob's been changed, educated his family, and made them his assistants in husbandry. Joseph, Rachel's son, had the largest share of his affection. Among other reasons, this ought to be one, for marrying the object of our purest and best founded love, that the children may have that love reflected on them to the last. And, as Moses observes, Joseph being the son of Jacob's old age, he would naturally draw his father's fondness on him; as all mankind desire to be, as it were, renewed in their offspring, when they are about to leave the world themselves. Though, by this rule, it may be thought Benjamin, the youngest of all, would have pressed harder on the old man's heart, we are yet to consider that affection may be often pre-engaged; and Joseph might have anticipated that power in the Patriarch's mind, as he was the first born after his despair of Rachel's fruitfulness. There is no necessity for supposing, as some interpreters have done, that Joseph was wiser, or more wonderfully attracting, than all his other brethren were; though, from the figure he afterwards made in life, it is not in the least improbable.

At the same time that we must acknowledge, the predilection of a parent for one child more than another, is often inaccountable; yet whatever may be the cause of it, and however just and intense the passion; we ought, nevertheless, to caution every one carefully to conceal it from the rest; lest jealousy, the most dangerous poison possible, should infect the whole family. Jacob, sagacious and experienced as he was, had not this command over himself. Not only was his heart always open for Joseph, but he outwardly testified

testified his ascendancy by every distinguishing mark. *He made him a coat of many colours*; or, as some interpreters describe it, a long robe or mantle, to denote the sovereignty and dominion he should have over his brethren. Perhaps the Patriarch had no respect to this, when he clothed his son agreeable to his own fancy.

SUCH marks of preference could not but inflame the hatred of his more advanced, discerning and ambitious brethren. And he became so much the more odious to them, that *he brought unto his father their evil report*. The indeterminateness of the expression leaves us at liberty to suppose, that this report was either of some profane words, or some wicked action of which they had been guilty.

THEIR jealousy, their contemptuous speeches, and revengeful projects were, accordingly, every day redoubled; while the most significant presages were, at the same time, given of his elevation above them all. He had two visions, as we may call them, on his bed in the night, which he could not conceal, and related them to Jacob in presence of the whole family. He dreamed that *he, and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, and that his sheaf arose, and stood upright, and received the obeysance, the homage of the rest*. He dreamed also, that *the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars did obeysance to him*. Those dreams, it is not to be doubted, came from God, and prognosticated that astonishing greatness to which he afterwards rose. This application of them we may make with the greater certainty, as it seems to have been the will of God to establish such methods of prediction, under former dispensations,

dispensations, to give some foreknowledge of his future designs.

INDEED, if all the principal images in this last dream must have had some literal correspondence, before we can thus apply them; while Jacob, who seems to have been represented by the sun, and his eleven brethren by the same number of stars, prostrate themselves before Joseph, and put themselves under his protection, as they actually did in Egypt; we cannot well comprehend who answers to the moon, seeing Rachel was dead, not only at the time his brethren bowed to him, but also when this very dream happened.

BUT, be it observed, that to verify a dream, it is not necessary, that every constituent object, presented to the imagination, should correspond to some particular event. It is sufficient, as in a parable, if all the scattered ideas are so collected as to terminate in one general reality. This actually happened in the case before us. Nothing could more aptly prefigure to a man his future power and dignity, than the sun, the moon, and the stars humbling themselves at his feet. And several commentators are of opinion, that after Rachel's death, Leah, or some other of Jacob's wives, discharged the office of a mother to Joseph, and is here described by the moon, who, together with the rest of a numerous family, should fall down and worship him. But whatever truth there may be in the assertion, that Joseph's loss of his mother was affectionately supplied, we find Moses, who gives us a list of the persons that went down into Egypt with Jacob, makes no mention of any of his wives: They had probably all died in
the

the land of Canaan, before the memorable famine had commenced, which occasioned their removal from it.

JACOB, perhaps, perfectly understood that those dreams had a divine origin; but perceiving likewise the bad effect they might have upon his other children, he rebuked Joseph when he related them; and said, as we may paraphrase his expostulation, what! shall I, who am an hundred years old, thy own mother who is dead, or thy step-mother so kind and indulgent, and thy brethren, so averse to thy promotion, come and reverently solicit thy patronage!

BUT however seasonable this rebuke was, the design of it was frustrated. Repeated notices of superiority, produced such malice in his brethren, that his life could only appease them; and they were never satisfied till they had an opportunity of indulging that malice to the full.

THE Patriarch commanding Joseph to go and see whether it was well with his brethren, and well with the flocks, after wandering a long time in the wilderness, he came up to them in *Dothan*. Another strong image of those primitive times, when such a scope of country was occupied by innumerable flocks and herds; which were watched by ten sons of an eminent and potent prince; who thought of no other employments in a land, where every ones wealth and greatness consisted solely in cattle and corn; and not in titles, and places of preferment, with which we are now acquainted. No sooner did those men see their helpless and unsuspecting brother, coming to visit them, than they formed the bloody project of taking
away

away his life. Reuben was shocked at the proposal; either because the violent expedition of two of his brethren among the *Shechemites*, in the affair of *Dinah*, and which had brought so much disgrace upon their house, had sufficiently disgusted him at blood; or being the eldest of the family, he considered himself more immediately answerable to his father for their conduct. He, therefore, opposed his brethren's cruel design: And if he did not succeed in diverting their fury altogether, he at least diminished it, by turning it into another channel. He advised them to cast him into one of the pits of the wilderness, like those pools or wells, of which we read in the eighty-fourth psalm, purposely dug for receiving and preserving the rain, used instead of springs in hot and sandy countries; and out of which he intended to draw Joseph, at a convenient time, without the knowledge of the rest. The overture was hearkened to, and followed: And those barbarous men, *took a younger brother*, who had no defence but tears and cries, feeble and unavailing when opposed to hatred and revenge, *and threw him into the pit.*

AFTER they had executed this atrocious deed, they saw a company, or caravan, of *Ismaelitic merchants*, who were going down to *Egypt*, with their camels, bearing *spicery and balm, and myrrh*, to be used in preserving dead bodies from putrefaction, for which Egypt was then so famous. Those merchants always travelled in large bodies, as they do in many places at this day, for their greater security against robbers, and against wild beasts. Judah suggesting to his brethren that they might sell Joseph to that company, they agreed; and their design in this criminal traffic, being less
from

from avarice, than to get rid of a brother whom they abhorred and dreaded, they rated him lower than the ordinary price at which slaves were afterwards sold; and actually gave him up for *twenty pieces of silver*. Though most interpreters understand by this sum, so many *shekels**, which, in our currency, amount only to two pound ten shillings; there are some, who make them only *Gerahs*, in all half a crown †.

REUBEN was not present when this step was taken. He still hoped to accomplish the humane and just design he had formed, of delivering him to his father again. His surprise and grief were, accordingly, excessive when he saw his hopes frustrated; and perhaps thought Joseph was dead. He rent his cloaths, and, returning to his brethren, said, *The child is not! and I, whither shall I go?—And Joseph's brethren took his coat, the coat of many colours, and having dyed it in the blood of a kid, they sent it to their father; presuming he would instantly believe that an evil beast ‡ had destroyed him.* Jacob, incapable of imagining that his sons could be accessary to the death or banishment of their brother, or so wicked as to put any imposition on him in a matter of such dreadful consequence, was caught in the snare; and the thorough persuasion of Joseph's death, cost him as much sorrow and affliction, as if he had been really murdered or devoured. *Joseph, said he, is without doubt rent in pieces!* and immediately manifested every mark of distress, that a tender parent may be allowed to feel, when he loses a son, whose value is heightened to him, by the love which he has constantly bestowed on him. *Jacob rent his cloaths, and*

* B. Patrick. † Siclis, Vide Polum. ‡ So wild beasts are called in scripture.

put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and said, I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. And he wept for him. And from this affliction and sorrow of his, the reflection obviously forces itself upon us; that Jacob's sons, knowing his affection for Joseph, and foreseeing how he would receive the news of his death, and spend the remainder of his days in misery, were as impious and criminal in this respect, as in the act of selling their brother, whose future honor was possible, while their father's peace and happiness were torn by their sacrilegious hands for ever from him. What a dreadful curse, without repentance and extraordinary grace, must all children guilty of such wickedness, in the just judgments of God necessarily incur!

MEAN while, the *Ismaelitisb* merchants, whom Moses likewise calls *Midianites*, probably because that company was a mixture of those two neighbouring nations, carried Joseph into Egypt, and sold him with the rest of their merchandise. *Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard, purchased him. Much criticism has been bestowed upon the two designations given here of this great man, hardly worth relating, and without making the matter any clearer in the end. Concerning Joseph himself, the hero of the whole relation, we are expressly told, at the beginning of the thirty-ninth chapter, that the Lord was with him, and he was a prosperous man. And Joseph found grace in Potiphar's sight, for he made him overseer over his house, and put all that he had into his hand; so that he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat; till his wife cast her eyes wantonly on Joseph, who*
was

was a goodly person, and well favored, The consequence of this affair, through the artifice and resentment of a disappointed woman, and the thirst of revenge in a jealous husband, was Joseph's unjust confinement in a prison; where, in a strange land, and obnoxious to one of the King's favorite servants, we might have reasonably expected his sudden death, or rather in the most public and dreadful manner. But this is anticipating the history, which, hereafter, will be more fully considered.

THUS, we have, briefly, seen an innocent youth, first sold by his brethren, for the love his father bore to him, and the information he gave of their faults, and again by the Midianites, to be the slave of a man who soon cast him into prison for righteousness sake. And all this came to pass by a singular providence; that by the same interposition, which only could provide and direct all the means leading to it, he might afterwards be raised almost to regal honor and authority. The whole dispensation was preparatory to that more complicated and extensive one, by which a whole nation of his own kindred and descendants were to be formed in Egypt, and whom God Almighty, the wise ruler of the world, designed to be the keepers of his sacred will, and lights to the whole earth, till the last days, when he should send forth his own son in human flesh.

BETWEEN Christ the son of the eternal father, and him whose history we have been contemplating, it may be proper barely to observe, that divines, of good sense and sound judgment, have often drawn a long and striking parallel: And it is certain, that an

enlightened and pious mind, may find strong and useful similitudes on this subject, though it is not convenient to be over-exact in the application of many circumstances.

WE may aptly conclude with the words of the hundred and fifth psalm, where the transactions we have been viewing are distinctly commemorated; *O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people; talk ye of all his wonderful works; for how terrible is he in his doings towards the children of men.*

DISSERTATION XXVII.

Continuation of *Joseph's* History, till the arrival of the
ten Patriarchs in Egypt.

GENESIS XXXIX, &c.

WHILE Jacob, at a greatly advanced age, and under other trials and difficulties, was every day remembering and lamenting his beloved son's tragical end, and astonished, beyond measure, what could possibly be the meaning of those dreams, and in what manner they might be fulfilled, which had brought envy and ruin upon that innocent youth; for when he related them, we are told his father observed them; while Jacob, I say, was thus exercised at home, Joseph, by a wonderful providence, was paving the way for his father's and brethren's preservation, in a future season of distress, and for the commencement of that grand dispensation, the forming out of a few persons an illustrious multitude of people, who should be the guardians of the laws of God in the promised land, till

the coming of the Messiah, who should establish a covenant with the whole earth.

INDEED, with *the blessings that rested on the head of him who was separated from his brethren*, there was, for a short time, a severe affliction mingled. The secret appointment of God, as well as the workings of human passions, produced, we may be certain, the cross accident. This being slightly touched in the foregoing dissertation, must necessarily have a larger place here. The case was this: While Potiphar availed himself of the prosperity that attended Joseph's conduct and designs, his wife, influenced by the immodesty and unchastity which highly prevailed among the Egyptian women, viewed Joseph's person, and was captivated by his charms. And as almost the whole sex, when once they have exceeded the first limits of shame, easily disregard all other restraints, this licentious woman, not being able, either with the blandishments or threatenings, which *Josephus** mentions, to persuade this righteous youth to sin against God, resolved to compel him. The same historian relates some fine speeches, which Joseph employed, on this occasion, in order to check and defeat the purposes of his mistress. But the most eloquent and pathetic speech possible, at such a juncture, could not have been so expressive of his abhorrence of such an act, nor so effectual a guard to his innocence, as what he immediately did, without speaking a word, at least so far as we know from the sacred relation: Moses, who, on a former occasion, hath recorded Joseph's expostulations, only says at this last attack, that *he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.*

* Antiquit. Judaic. Lib. 11.

THE *adulteress will hunt for the precious life* * is an observation by wise Solomon; which, no doubt, signifies that when she is despised, she will proceed to the last extremity, till she has revenged herself for the contempt of her favor, and the disappointment of her lust. Potiphar's wife, accordingly, accused Joseph of the crime of which she herself only was guilty, in her polluted imagination and desires. Her husband perhaps saw through the affair: But as the slightest suspicions of a woman's infidelity, reflect upon the man against whom it has been designed, Potiphar condemned Joseph, to save his own honor; and yet at the same time, to satisfy his conscience, he carried his resentment no higher than imprisonment; though he might have had his servant's life, for the offence of which he was impeached. And even for this loss of liberty, some compensation, by the direction of an invisible judge and ruler, was made to Joseph. Instead of experiencing in confinement, the pains and miseries of a captive, or the disgrace of an atrocious detested criminal, he enjoyed, in some measure, the condition of a free man, and was treated with a distinguishing respect. He had maintained and asserted his innocence, and heaven had given weight to his words, by the remarkable successes which had accompanied all his negotiations. This, and his constantly mild and exemplary demeanor, *in the place where the king's prisoners were bound*, soon gained him the same ascendancy over the jailor's mind, that he had lately had in the house and affections of Potiphar.

In the same prison, we are told, were two of Pharaoh's officers of considerable quality, for some offence

* Proverbs vi. 26.

they had committed against their lord the king. The one was butler, or cup-bearer, the other baker; and tho' these names may suggest to us very mean ideas at first, we are yet to consider that this scene is laid in Egypt, where, instead of slaves, and the lower classes of people, being admitted to the most menial offices, none but persons illustrious by their rank and birth, were suffered to hold them, or to have any employment in the houses of their kings.

Now each of those state prisoners had a dream; the one dreamed *that he saw a vine having three branches, which first budded, then blossomed, and lastly brought forth ripe grapes*; and that having Pharaoh's cup in his hand he pressed the grapes into it, and gave the cup to Pharaoh. The other dreamed *that he had three white baskets, with all manner of baked-meats for Pharaoh on his head, and the birds came and did eat them*. Joseph told the butler that *in three days he would be restored to his dignity and office*; and the baker, *that in the same space of time he would be hanged, and his flesh devoured by the birds of the air*.

BOTH interpretations were fully justified by the respective events. The baker was condemned to die, as Joseph had foretold; and the cup-bearer obtained favor. But tho' a man so extraordinary, as Joseph must have seemed to be, had feelingly solicited his interest to bring him out of the dungeon, and told him that *he was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews*, and had done nothing in Egypt for which they should put him *in ward*, the butler, on his own re-establishment, immediately forgot him. Ingratitude, indeed, is said to be the vice of courtiers; and, of some excellent panegyrics

panegyrics and sermons, the celebrated author observes, that, for the most part, those who rise from disgrace or meanness, to high degrees of glory, and to distinguished fortunes, forget and despise those who have been the companions and witnesses of their past indigence; and remove, from their sight and remembrance, every object that can renew the image and mortifying reflection of their former distresses*. This writer had, perhaps, seen his own sensible remarks many times verified.

And it came to pass at the end of two years, either from Joseph's imprisonment, or the butler's promotion, that Pharaoh himself had dreams which mightily troubled him, and made him send in the morning, for all the magicians of Egypt, and for all the wise men thereof; but to no purpose. Then it was that the chief-butler, to procure relief and satisfaction for the anxious monarch, mentioned Joseph, who was in the prison with him, and commended his knowledge and wisdom. The Hebrew interpreter was, instantly, brought before the king; who informed him, that he had seen in a dream, on the banks of the Nile, seven cows, fat-fleshed, and well-favored; and they were fed in a meadow. And quickly there appeared seven other cows, poor, and very ill-favored, such as had never been seen in all the land of Egypt; and these last eat up the first, without fattening them. In like manner, he saw, in another dream, seven ears of corn, on one stalk, full and good; and seven ears thin, and withered, and blasted with the east wind, spring up after them; and these thin ears also devoured the seven good ears: And the king concluded, with declaring the

* Flechier, Evêque de Nîmes, part. II.

ignorance of his own *magicians*, and demanded Joseph's explanation.

JOSEPH, first of all, refreshed the monarch's memory concerning a maxim established, we are told, among the Egyptians, that the art of divination was not an human acquisition, but the gift of heaven*. *It is not in me, says he, but God shall give Pharoah an answer of peace*: And having thus confessed the revealer of secrets, for the assistance he was about to receive, the dreams were interpreted. He informed Pharoah that both of them signified the same thing; and the doubling of the vision shewed that the event was decreed by God, who would shortly bring his purpose to pass. *The seven fat cows, and the seven good ears of corn, represented seven years of plenty, which were just commencing; and the seven lean cows, and seven blasted ears of corn, denoted seven years of famine, which should immediately succeed them.* How natural the types! *Ears of corn* were exceedingly expressive of the condition of Egypt, in regard to it's plenty or want; and *cattle* not less. An ox was the hieroglyphic for the earth, agriculture and all sorts of food. And the *Nile*, on the banks of which Pharoah saw those objects, was the most universal cause of the poverty or riches of that country. *Egypt*, Pliny tells us †, was visited with famine, when that river rose no higher than twelve cubits; with scarcity, when only thirteen; when it rose fourteen, the people rejoiced; fifteen, they promised themselves all kinds of necessities; and sixteen, innumerable pleasures and delights. That river was, therefore, worshipped as a God ‡. And hearing

* Herodot. Lib. 11.

† Plin. Hist. Nat. Lib. 7. Cap. ix.

‡ Voss. de idol. Lib. 11.

that

that *Greece* was only watered and fructified by rains, and not by rivers, as their country was, the *Egyptians*, humorously said, that it might, on certain occasions, be defrauded of it's treasure by some surly god, and reduced to very hard cheer *.

PURSUING the history, we find that Joseph did more than foretel what was to happen : He proposed measures of which Pharoah might avail himself, and make the seven first years of plenty, mitigate the rigors of the other years of scarcity and want : He advised the king to appoint officers for collecting the fifth part of all the produce of the land of *Egypt*, during the years of plenty ; that when the famine came, the inhabitants might not utterly perish.

THIS important view of things, and the wise counsel, in consequence, offered, induced Pharoah, not only to give Joseph his liberty, but likewise promote him immediately to the highest station in the kingdom. He commanded him to be acknowledged by all his subjects, as *the deliverer of Egypt*, owned himself the superiority of his wisdom, and that *the spirit of God was in him*. Besides conferring on Joseph the superintendence of the royal family, the king made him also lord of the whole land, and ordered all the people to obey him.

HAVING thus communicated to him a real and effectual power, Pharoah, moreover, adorned Joseph with all the exterior symbols and marks of it. *He arrayed him in vestures of fine linen*, for which *Egypt* was the wonder of the world, *put a gold chain about his*

* Herdot. Lib. 11. Cap. xiii.

neck, and a ring on his hand, taken from his own: An act common in the eastern nations, to denote high exaltation, and great delegated power.

EQUIPPED in this manner, Joseph was shewn to the people in a royal chariot, preceded by officers, who made proclamation, accompanied with the most pompous and solemn apparatus, that the king's pleasure was, they should *bow the knee*. The translation of the word *bow the knee*, is attended with some difficulty. In Hebrew, the first syllable signifies *father*; and the second, in Syriac, *king* *. Whence some learned interpreters have thought that the compound expressed the father of the king. But, notwithstanding the countenance given this interpretation, by what Joseph himself said to his brethren, that *God had made him a father to Pharaoh*, a certain critic †, well skilled in those languages, by the smallest change in the spelling, supports the common version, *bow the knee*.

A WELL known custom among the people of the east, was to give new names, from particular circumstances, to such persons as they adopted into their service. Sundry instances of this we have had already by divine authority, in the names of *Abraham*, *Sarah*, and *Israel*; and more occur in the course of the scriptures. Thus Pharaoh, on Joseph's advancement, called him *Zaphnath-paaneah*; which some have rendered *the saviour of the people*, but the far greater part of the ancients, *revealer of secrets*.

THE king, moreover, formed for Joseph a powerful alliance, by marrying him to *Asenath*, the daugh-

* Heb. אָבִיר.

† Ainsworth on Genesis xli.

ter of *Potipherab*, priest and prince of *On*, or *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, famous for the worship of the sun, and where was annually celebrated, with infinite magnificence, a feast in honour of that luminary. From this marriage with *Asenath*, who some say, immediately renounced idolatry, and acknowledged the true God, sprung two sons; *the first was Manasseh*, for, said Joseph, *God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house*; the second *Ephraim*, for, said he again, *God hath made me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction*.

Thus, though the prophet's expression be still true, that *God hideth himself**, there sometimes are unfoldings of the clouds, with which he frequently covers himself, and such affecting strokes of providence as shew that he never abandons the government of the universe. In this history of Joseph we have seen innocence oppressed by calumny, and groaning in a prison, among malefactors. But, in his elevation, we have also seen, the same innocence breaking forth in all its splendor, and universally acknowledged. Examples of this kind are evidences that *the Lord reigneth*†, and give us confidence in his equity and wisdom.

* Isaiah xlv. 15. † Psalm xcvi. 1.

DISSERTATION XXVIII.

Of JOSEPH'S behaviour to his brethren; and their
return to CANAAN.

GENESIS XLII.

THE famine foretold by Joseph at length commenced. It may appear somewhat strange, that preparations for it, during so many years in Egypt, and a still longer space before, should never have conveyed to Jacob, any account of so extraordinary a man in that country; nor the circumstances of his name, his nation, and high promotion from slavery, appear to raise strong conjectures in his mind, and make him apply Joseph's dreams, which, having prefaged such singular fortune, had incurred the envy of his brethren. The difficulty will vanish when we reflect, that, besides the persuasion, reasonably entertained by Jacob, that Joseph was devoured by a wild beast, which prevented all search for him, and destroyed the fondest expectations; posts and couriers, like those we now have, were then altogether unknown; and intelligence between nations much less
remote,

remote, by no means regularly carried on, so far as certain history instructs us, till the reign of Cyrus the great, who established those methods of intercourse. And yet the report, that there was corn in Egypt, is perfectly consistent and natural, when severe hunger, and the fear of a lingering death, would forcibly engage the enquiries of every family, and make men of every condition seek for relief.

IN this kingdom, therefore, Jacob's ten sons arrived, and appeared before Joseph; whom the forementioned space, and foreign sumptuous apparel had so disguised, that not the least ground for suspecting him to be their brother could possibly remain: While their dress, language and aspect, made him instantly know them. Emotions, too various to be encountered at once, then rose in his mind; and, in part, produced that singular conduct towards them, which, perhaps, in every act, cannot be fully justified; though the whole, taken together, testified the greatest wisdom, and tended to the discovery of his secret design. This was to know whether Jacob and Benjamin were still alive; but necessity required him to behave in such a manner, as to leave himself at liberty to conceal the truth from his brethren, or to make the discovery as he should think fit. His stern accusation, that they were enterprising spies, who had come into the land to explore the weakness of its fortifications, and the defects of its government *, of which they might take advantage, a learned geographer of the ancient territories † observes, was the more reasonable, as those men had come from a quarter where Egypt could easily be attacked and invaded by an

* This is M. Le Clerc's gloss.

† Herodot. Lib. iii. Cap. v.
enemy.

enemy. The vast deserts of Cyrene, Lybia, and Ethiopia, which bounded it on the west and south, were its impregnable barriers there.

IN their reply, they defended themselves with the simplicity which always accompanies truth and innocence. *Thy servants*, said they to Joseph, *are ten brethren the sons of one man in the land of Canaan*; who would hardly expose themselves to the common dangers of such a bold design, especially when their father had lost a son already by a fatal accident, and only one left with him of the whole family.

By this stratagem Joseph learned that Jacob and Benjamin were still alive; but in order to obtain farther information, he made the weakness of their evidence a farther argument of his suspicions; and told them that nothing could deliver them from the harsh treatment of which they might perhaps complain, but the most satisfactory exculpation of themselves. *Let one of you*, said he, *go into Canaan, and bring down thither that young brother whom ye say is there*: Your innocence shall be proved by your chearfulness to comply with this command; otherwise, *by the life of Pharaoh, ye are surely spies*. The notion which some interpreters have entertained, that by this form of affirmation Joseph swore religiously, and impiously ascribed to the monarch of Egypt the perfections of the supreme God, is without any foundation; as is also the remark of some severe moralists, that he had contracted the habit of swearing profanely in an abandoned court. The expression is the same in substance with that used by *Abigail to David*, when she said, *as thy*
soul

soul liveth *, which is only a strong assertion, in regard to the convictions or intentions which a person may have conceived. In the same manner the first christians, who were always so scrupulous about every appearance of idolatry, always protested and swore by the life of the emperors, while they constantly refused to appeal to the genii and false gods †.

To convince them, by the severity of his conduct, that his suspicions were not feigned, Joseph ordered his brethren to be seized, and shut up in prison, where they remained three whole days; and then had the condition of their liberty and lives again repeated, with this relaxation that, instead of nine being kept as hostages for their fidelity, they might go to their native country with provisions, and only one should be detained till they returned with Benjamin.

THE various incidents in the whole affecting relation are all equally interesting and new; but the limits of this work will not allow us to unfold them all, in an history larger than the text, which every one possesses. There we see described the anguish of the patriarchs' hearts in Joseph's presence, and his inexpressibly tender feelings touched; Simeon bound with the greatest rigor, perhaps for his general violence and injustice, and as having been the principal adviser to sell Joseph to the merchant-men; the return of the nine with corn, and their surprise and fear when every one found the money in his sack which he had paid to Joseph's commissary in Zoan. We have

* 1. Sam. xxv. 26. † Juramus sicut non per genios Cæsarum, ita per salutem eorum quæ est augustior omnibus geniis. Tertull. Apologet. Cap. xxxii.

represented in the Mosaic account, their arrival at their own habitations, and their father's house, where they told all the strange things that had befallen them; Jacob's affliction when he heard of Simeon's captivity, whom he considered as lost for ever, and Reuben's declaration of the farther demand which the Lord of Egypt had made of Benjamin, without whom they were never to see his face again, nor expect to have Simeon released: *But, said he, slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again: Who received the indignant answer; Ah! wherefore did ye deal so ill with me, as to tell the man that you had another brother! Me have ye bereaved of my children! Joseph is not! and Simeon is not! and ye will take Benjamin away! all these things are against me! My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left, the single pledge of my love for Rachel; and if mischief befall him in the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.*

BUT seeing the grain consumed, and himself and family surrounded with all the horrors of famine, Jacob's paternal love and tenderness were conquered, and he at last consented that Benjamin should go with his brethren. He gave them his best advice; presents for the governor of Egypt; the money which had been put into their sacks, perhaps inadvertently; and his blessing in these solemn words, equally expressive of his piety and affection; *God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin; yet, mark his resolution mixed with the bitterest sorrow, if I am bereaved of my children, let me be bereaved.*

IN

IN the multitude of their thoughts within them, and with which they would perplex one another, his sons arrived in Egypt the second time, and were introduced to Joseph, who immediately asked the important question, *is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? is he yet alive?* and seeing his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, he said, *God be gracious to thee my son;* So full and overwhelmed was his soul with joy and sympathy, he could add no more at this time.

NEXT, Moses describes a feast suitable to the bounty and magnificence of a prince, with all the peculiar arrangements, which his dignity, and a difference in religion, demanded. At this feast, Joseph distinguished Benjamin, by appointing for him five times as much as for any of his brethren; agreeable to an ancient custom, recorded by Eusebius, in the ninth book of his Evangelical Preparation, from Alexand. Polyhistor. After this indulgent hospitality, the ruler of Joseph's household was privately commanded to fill the sacks of his brethren with corn; to put the price of it in them as before, which they had, most ingenuously, and with the greatest amazement, acknowledged to have found on their way; and to inclose, besides, his silver cup in Benjamin's. Thus innocently involved in apparent circumstances of complicated guilt, they were not long departed, when by Joseph's instructions, they were stopt by the same officer, and severely reproached with baseness and ingratitude, in stealing the cup in which his master used to drink. Commentators have multiplied opinions beyond number, concerning this expression. The word in old times was, very probably, of an indifferent signi-

C c fication;

fication*; and, therefore, some have translated, *is not this the cup in which my lord drinks, and consequently would soon call for †?* and others, *is not this the cup in which my lord drinks, and by which he hath proved you, and found that you are worthless men ‡?* The latter explanation has been followed by a great many interpreters both ancient and modern §. Others translate literally, especially the Jews, who believe that Joseph was a magician.

THIS character, originally, had nothing bad in it: It only expressed great wisdom and knowledge, till it was afterwards perverted, and became as deservedly hateful, as it was vain and ridiculous. Indeed as many || have given descriptions of the various methods of divination by cups in Egypt, and in other countries, Joseph, at the same time that he derided such methods, might, nevertheless, so far carry on the disguise, as to make his brethren believe, in their ignorance, that he was skilled in that art.

HOWEVER that was, they were astonished at the charge; protested their innocence, and devoted the guilty person to death, and themselves to slavery. But how much greater was their astonishment and dread, when the cup was found with Benjamin, which obliged them to return to Joseph's house, and expose themselves to his resentment!

* Bishop Patrick in loco. † Targum of Onkelos. ‡ Arabic Version. § Variable in loco. || Voyez Bodin des forciers. Liv. II. Vide Cornel. Agrip. de occulta philosophia. Lib. I. Wierus de magis infamibus. Cap. XII. &c. &c. who have largely described those methods. But Bishop Patrick says, we do not know now what they were.

DISSERTATION XXVIII. 387

THE concluding scenes where Joseph makes him-
self known to his brethren, and receives his father,
shall be the subject of the following dissertation.

DISSEMINATION

DISSERTATION XXIX.

Of JOSEPH's making himself known to his Brethren;
and JACOB's descent into EGYPT.

GENESIS XLV, &c.

BEFORE we proceed to the matter of this dissertation, we shall dwell a little longer, on what was just hinted before; namely, the probable reasons that determined Joseph to pursue his course of behaviour towards his brethren; which seems to have something so singular and extraordinary in it, that it is impossible to forbear such questions as these: What could induce him to postpone, to an uncertain hereafter, the joy of a good father, which the knowledge of his beloved son's safety, and high honor, must necessarily give him? Instead of making him happy instantly with the news, why should he invent fresh causes of sorrow and sufferings? Why was not his first care, when Canaan groaned under the severe scourge of famine, to provide an ample and lasting subsistence for

his family? Could he, whose authority and influence were unbounded in Egypt, apprehend any bad consequence from a discovery of his birth and nation, which his language, and his own confession, had already fixed? And even if this should have been the case, ought he not to have surmounted the apprehension, performed his duty, and left the event to Providence?

IN his contrary conduct there is apparently something difficult, and crossing the dictates of religion and nature: And yet, Joseph's character being so amiable and compleat, that few, if any, equal it in other respects, we may rest assured that he had solid and wise reasons for this conduct; some of which, perhaps arising out of peculiar circumstances, we cannot now suggest; while a few may be given that are perfectly plain and natural. Perhaps his affection for Benjamin made him afraid of exposing him to the farther envy of his brethren, and wish to have him in safe possession. Perhaps he was unwilling, for a while, to reveal the guilt of his brethren in regard to himself. Perhaps also, prudence made him decline risking any thing in point of fortune, at a time when his father's house required his aid so much; till a convenient season should occur, when he might make them ample compensation for a few severe acts, without hazarding his own interest. At least, as he was so remarkably blessed and prospered by heaven, we may be satisfied that the grounds of his procedure were good.

THESE reflections being premised, the present passage now comes to be considered: Judah's affecting

ing speech to Joseph, we have related in the foregoing chapter, which an Hebrew commentator paraphrases thus: When we appeared the first time before thee, O my Lord, we answered simply all the questions thou wast pleased to ask, touching our family. We told thee that we had a father, stooping under years, and the weight of continual fatigues and adversities. We said that we had a brother extremely dear to him, having been the only son left of his mother, after his brother had come to a tragical end. Him my Lord, with grievous threatenings, which sounded in our ears all the way, thou commandedst to be brought. We related what had happened to our father. He refused to send his child, till the force of famine, and confidence in my tenderness and promises, prevailed over his paternal fondness. Then he let him go, and lo! he stands before my Lord! For him I am responsible, and on his life my father's depends. Have compassion, I beseech thee, and let the misery of the old man, if this child is not restored to him, and whom he parted with against his will, move thy soul. If a sacrifice must be made, accept of me: On me pronounce sentence, and inflict the pains he hath incurred. With all my heart I consent to be one of your slaves, on the condition that my brother is set at liberty. And let pity for his youth, let pity for my misfortune, affect my Lord less, than for the absent, fond, old father. Suffer not that mighty hand of thine to crush us, under which, as an hallowed altar, we have taken refuge, and looked for protection from our calamities. Feel for an old man, who, during a series of many years, hath pursued the paths, and improved himself in the practice of probity; and is highly esteemed among the
Syrians,

Syrians, though he professes a religion different from theirs, and follows another sort of life *

THIS paraphrase, so full and conformable to the account Moses gives of the matter, must be pleasing to every reader, and aptly introduces the motives, and the manner of Joseph's making himself known to his brethren. First of all, the emotions of his own heart, so heightened by the workings of pure nature, could no longer be controled; then his brethren's affliction; the thoughts of Jacob's grief, if he saw not Benjamin return, and heard that he was in bondage; and the desire of seeing his father soon, together with the assurance he now had of the anxiety of the Patriarchs about their father's happiness; of their relatings, and bitter remorse, for having sold himself, and their kind usage of his brother; those feelings and reflections prevailed at last, over all the maxims of human prudence and policy; and forced him instantly to dis-embarrass and comfort them, and discover the strange conclusion to which those mysterious scenes were to come. He commanded the Egyptians, who were waiting, to withdraw. Distraction or restraint are highly painful, in the swelled effusions of love and tenderness, and we are naturally unwilling to lay open the heart, in the presence of such as cannot enter into our feelings, and in some measure partake of them with us.

WHEN Joseph and his brethren were alone, he poured forth a flood of tears, accompanied with this declaration, in tremulous and broken accents; *I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?* And as his brethren were troubled, and could not answer him, he imme-

* Philo Judæus, *de Josepho*, pag. 558.

diately

diately administered all the relief in his power; he said, *come near to me, I pray you; and they came near;* when he farther said, *I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. But be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. These two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years, in the which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God, and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

IN this manner did Joseph make himself known to his brethren; whom, instead of condemning for their cruelty towards him, he in some measure, justifies, by representing the over-ruling hand of God as conducting the whole affair, and deducing so many great and important consequences from it. At this most delicate crisis, he hath given a surprising evidence of the superiority of his understanding, of his wisdom, and piety at once. And when his brethren could hardly believe what they had yet heard and seen to be true, he descended, still farther, to the most intimate familiarity, and said again, *behold your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.* Having thus convinced them, almost against the testimony of their senses, Joseph pressed them to depart for Canaan; to inform his father that he was still alive; of all his glory which they had seen in Egypt; and to beseech him to come down into that kingdom without delay. Lest the Patriarch's infirmities, and the length of the way, should prevent him from undertaking the journey, his son proposed

proposed to settle him in *Goshen*, which was a division of the *lower Egypt*, on the east of the Nile, bordering on Arabia, and the frontiers of *Palæstine*. Near this stood the city in which the kings of Egypt then resided, where Joseph himself staid with Pharaoh; called *Zoan* in the seventy eighth psalm, and by some profane authors *Tanis*, as also by the Septuagint *. This proximity Joseph alledged to his brethren, as a reasonable motive which should determine Jacob to remove to a place, where, with the greatest ease, he might have intercourse with his son. Pursuing the history, in the following verses of the chapter, we find, he, finally, said, *haste you, and go up to my father, and say unto him; thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Egypt; and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast.*

Thus Joseph disposed of a province of Egypt, without the knowledge of Pharaoh, and, no doubt, knew he might, without abusing his authority, which shews us the dignity and power to which he had advanced himself, and the confidence that was reposed in his justice. The prince himself was no sooner apprised of the arrival of the sons of Jacob, than he confirmed every thing which Joseph had done. He conversed with them himself; urged them to depart; and come back quickly, with all they had, into his dominions. He ordered all sorts of carriages to be prepared for them; and all sorts of provisions which might be necessary in their journey. And lest the transporting their furniture should retard their

* In loco.

return,

return, and Joseph's felicity, the king bade them, not regret what they might lose, or leave behind, as it should be largely repaid in Egypt.

JOSEPH, officially, executed Pharaoh's commands, and was the willing minister of that prince's liberality and magnificence. He supplied his brethren with all kinds of provisions and chariots, and loaded them with rich presents for Jacob. To all of them he gave, each man, changes of raiment; in which consisted a great part of the riches of the ancients. In the book of Judges* we see *Samson* promises thirty change of garments to any one that should interpret his riddle; and demands the same number if they could not. *Naaman the Syrian* brought ten changes of raiment, from his master to the King of Israel †, with many other things, for his good offices with the prophet *Elisha*, that *Naaman* might be cured. In the times of the first Roman Emperors, this species of luxury had risen to such a degree, that, as *Plutarch* relates ‡, *Lucullus the Prætor* had two hundred changes of raiment; and *Horace* makes them five thousand §. To this custom, very probably, *St. James* refers, when he says, weep ye rich men, for the miseries that shall come upon you; for your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten ||.

As, in this distribution, Benjamin was distinguished far above the rest; for Joseph gave him three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment; and such an evident partiality might excite their jealousy, and Jo-

* Judges xiv. 12, 13. † 11 Kings v. 5. ‡ Tom. i. in vita Luculli. § Tibi millia quinque esse domi chlamy- dum — Horat. L. i. Ep. vi. 44. ¶ St. James v. 1.

Joseph's promotion occasion disputes among his brethren, he, therefore, exhorted them, above all things, to preserve unity and concord among themselves.

THOSE sons of Jacob, thus departing from Zaan, performed their journey, and arrived in Canaan, where they related to their father all the strange things they had seen in Egypt. When they told him, that Joseph was yet alive, and governor of all that land, the Patriarch's raptures were so excessive that they affected the animal frame, and threw him into a *liposynny*, or fainting-fit; the usual and natural effect of a sudden surprise; and the more agreeable, it is the more powerful. Jacob had no expectation that Joseph was alive; and his elevation to such honors as they mentioned besides, could not but overwhelm the Patriarch with joy. To all gladness of heart, and every comfort, he had been a stranger since Joseph's supposed death; and now the whole tide of it, to compensate for all his sorrows, rushing on him at once, was too much for him to resist. But recovering from the extacy, when he saw the ten be asses laden with the things of Egypt, and ten be asses laden with corn and bread, and meat for him by the way, and the wagons and chariots, which Joseph had sent to carry him; knowing them to be beyond the power of fiction, and what the ability of none under the affluence and greatness of a prince could supply; the spirit of Jacob revived in him; and he was convinced their relation was true. And fully transported with the hope of beholding Joseph, he breathed out, abruptly, these expressive words; *it is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.*

AFTER

After Jacob had left Hebron, where he had long dwelt, God appeared to him in the same place, which his grandfather Abraham's piety had already rendered famous, namely *Beer-sheba*, in the most southerly parts of Canaan, and near that wilderness through which his posterity went, when they came from Egypt. He promised to be with him in his journey; to make him see his son; and that *Joseph should put his hands upon his eyes*. An expression full of signification: This being one of the last acts of tenderness to the dying, Jacob was hereby shewn that his exit should be peaceable in Egypt, and among his own dutiful and affectionate children. Penelope in *Homer*, speaking to Ulysses of Telemachus, prays to the Gods, that *the same son of theirs might close both their eyes*. And *Ovid's* paraphrase of the Greek is, *may the gods, when the will of the fates is fulfilled, grant thy eyes and mine be may shut*. Profane historians themselves furnishing us with many examples of this phrase, it must have been very ancient, and universally understood.

When Jacob approached Egypt, he sent Judah before him, to procure directions for *Goshen* *. Joseph

* Hanc regionem invenire labor haud levis est: Nam in Septuaginta derivari videtur vox a *גוש*, *pluvia*. Et Hieronymus in traditionibus Hebraicis, de hac voce sic loquitur; *Si ut in nostris codicibus est, per extremum m scribitur goshem, quod mihi nequaquam placet, Terram significat complutam; גוש, In imbrem vertitur; Ac si diceretur, in terra irrigua*. Sed tamen insuperabilis non est, quum illi senes, qui in Ægypto scripturas transtulerunt, alunt, *גושן* 'Agacia'. Ex his apparet, venerandos hos interpretes, atque Ægypti locorum probe gnaros, *Goshenie* nomine ea loca intellexisse quæ Palestinæ & Arabiæ proxima sunt. Et constat, porro, ex Strabone, Lib. xvii. aliisque authoribus, Heroum urbem fuisse prope sinum Elaniticum rubri maris. Spicil. Jamesonii Cap. 1.

dispatched guides; made ready his own chariot; and went up thence to meet *Israel* his father. Presenting himself before him, in expressive silence *he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.* When, like all other passions, after long and violent exertions, joy, love, tenderness had subsided, *Israel said unto Joseph, now let me die since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.*

THUS have we come again, in the course of this work, to another great period in the history of divine providence, which requires to be connected with the other periods that have gone before it, since the destruction of the old world. From the deluge to the calling of Abraham, four hundred and forty-five years may be reckoned, within which time the particular events have been described. And from the calling of Abraham, till Jacob and his family went down into Egypt, two hundred and fifteen years. Hence six hundred and sixty years is the age of the world, at this time, since it's restoration from water. New measures, therefore, notwithstanding that general scourge, by which the Almighty severely punished the whole earth for it's corruption, appear to have been necessary to instruct mankind, and keep alive the knowledge of the true God among them. For this purpose we have heard so much, during a large portion of the sacred history, of one particular man, whose various fortunes were not on his own account, but had respect to a vast body politic, and the world in general. For this, also, were seventy souls afterwards brought from a far country, to reside, with the consent of the whole nation, in *Goshen*, the richest province in Egypt. Here their situation, manners, and way

way of living, kept them separate from their idolatrous neighbours, and safe from hostilities, to which they must have been exposed, as they grew numerous in their enemies country of Palæstine. Thus God, by a surprising train of events, planted the family of Abraham in a nursery, where they were to grow up a great and mighty people, *in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.*

DISSERTA

DISSERTATION XXX.

Of Jacob's prophetic Benedictions; and Death.

GENESIS XLVIII. XLIX.

ISRAEL, after his introduction to Pharaoh himself, with five of his sons, having lived in the country of Goshen, for seventeen years, where *he had possessions, and grew and multiplied exceedingly*, and seen Joseph's greatness and virtues, approached the end of his pilgrimage, at the age of an hundred and forty-seven years. Before his death he desired to bestow on his family the prophetic and patriarchal benediction. Hearing that Joseph, whom he had invited from Zoan* the capital, was come, he was refreshed with the news; and, collecting all his strength, sat upon the bed and pronounced a few brief emblematical sentences.

* Urbs antiquissima, regia, & videtur ea fuisse illius Pharaonis regia, in quem Deus decem illas horrendas plagas effudit. Spicil. Jamesonii.

VARIOUS were the methods, by which the Almighty communicated to men in old times, the knowledge of his immediate pleasure, and of his remote appointments. Besides the *Schechinah*, already described, visions, voices and dreams, were frequently employed for this purpose, in the patriarchal ages; and, under the Jewish œconomy, the urim and thummin on the high priest's breast-plate. But of all other methods, the most regular and certain, and then subsisting, more or less, according to men's circumstances, was direct *inspiration*; whereby God, without the intervention of any of the senses, transacted immediately with the understandings of men; while they were awake, their powers active, and their minds calm and undisturbed. This, as indeed it was, the chosen people called *revelation* by the illumination of the Holy Ghost; and appears to have been the illustrious mode pursued at the opening of the gospel-kingdom; when the apostles of our Lord were enabled, by divine illapses, to apprehend clearly the truths delivered to them, and foretel what should afterwards come to pass.

In this way was Jacob instructed, what he should utter on this important occasion, by the father of spirits, whose foresight reaches from the beginning to the end of things.

THE solemn scene begins with the introduction of Joseph's two sons to the dying patriarch, who embraced and kissed them, and, from the overflowings of an affectionate and grateful heart, said to their father, *I never thought to see thy face, and lo! God hath even shewed me thy children*; and immediately adopted them.

them. Their equality of rank, and title of inheritance, are thus signified, *Ephraim and Manasseh are mine, as Reuben and Simeon*; Jacob's two eldest and most legitimate sons by Leah; *they shall be mine*. The connection of the following words may not instantly appear, for *when I came from Padan, Rachel died with me by the way*. But, besides the necessity he was under to speak, as Balaam said, *that which the Lord had put in his mouth*, these words very probably express the human motive which determined Jacob to raise Joseph's sons to the same dignity with his own, namely, because they were the grand children of Rachel, that beloved consort, whose death had been so dolorous to him, and whose dear idea he could not banish from his mind.

THE first example on record in the world, of the imposition of hands, is given in this passage, where we read that *Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, who was the first-born*. Joseph, supposing that the order of his father's hands was the effect of his infirmities, endeavoured to correct it, but Jacob said, *I know it my son, I know it; Manasseh shall also become a people, and he shall also be great; but truly Ephraim shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations*. This declares the circumstance to have been directed by God, who had decreed the worldly superiority of the younger over the elder. In two hundred years afterwards we, accordingly, find the prediction was fully verified, by a general muster of the Israelites in the wilderness, when in the tribe of Ephraim there were forty thousand and five hundred men able to bear arms,

arms, and in that of Manasseh only thirty two thousand and two hundred. And though in some instances the case was otherwise, the prophecy cannot be affected, as the tribe of Ephraim, for a succession of ages, was vastly more considerable than the other; produced the famous Joshua; was the chief tribe in Israel after the schism under Rehoboam; and often the name of the whole kingdom. For this preference no other reason can be assigned, than the mere will of God, who distributes honors, and all kinds of advantages as he pleases. Shem also, though younger, was set above Japhet; Isaac above Ishmael; Jacob above Esau; Judah and Joseph above Reuben; Moses above Aaron; and David above all the other sons of Jesse.

THE imposition of Jacob's hands was accompanied with a blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh, whose prosperity was to be so great, that, in all future ages, when the highest felicity was wished to an Israelite, they should say, *God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh*. This form, in fact, the Jews observe, in blessing the men, in all countries, at this day; and, in blessing the women, *God make you as Sarah and Rebecca**,

BLESSINGS on Joseph were repeated and multiplied. Besides the province, in the promised land, bestowed on his posterity, Jacob said to him, *I have, moreover, given thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite, with my sword and with my bow*. Whether these words have a metaphorical or a literal meaning, it is not easily determined. They are supposed to refer, to that piece of land lie

* Grotius in Gen. xlviii.

had bought of Hamor the father of Shechem; and from which he was afterwards obliged to drive the *Amorites*, who had invaded it, by force. Some distinction, like a birth-right, was certainly conveyed; perhaps all that Jacob could then actually leave. And Joseph's interment in that place fixes the point, that this was the paternal inheritance.

THE several blessings which Jacob's sons received, from this last will of their father, are contained in the forty-ninth chapter. According to the eastern stile, remarkably adorned with descriptions, it abounds, throughout, with the boldest figures, and the most striking imagery, which, of all other passages in the old testament, render it the most difficult to explain. The various fortunes of his sons depending on very remote periods, it was not fit that Jacob should describe every article distinctly: And, for this very reason, the divine inspirer might throw ambiguity into many parts of this solemn benediction. We may assert, however, in general, that this last testament, contains reflections upon the past lives of the twelve Patriarchs, agreeable to their several tempers, their actions and fates; and fixes the borders of their habitations, their advantages and necessities, after their children entered Canaan, with an admirable accuracy; as is evident from the latter histories of that people.

INSTEAD of pretending to explain and apply every thing which the Patriarch then pronounced, we shall only, in general, remark, that Jacob, at the beginning of his discourse, related the divine appearance and promise made to him, in his youth, at Luz or Bethel, and on which he had always rested his

faith and dependence. The promise, there, contained a grant to his seed after him, of the land of Canaan, *for an everlasting possession*. This land, by the direction of the spirit of God, without any positive divisions, is, accordingly, parcelled out, and significantly described, in the passage before us. But the term *everlasting*, when applied to the Jewish dispensation, must be, and in the clearest manner is, limited in most places in the old testament. In the tenth verse of this chapter, there is a most evident restriction of it to a definitive time.

In the *common blessing* of Judah, at the eighth verse, Jacob says, *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise*, in allusion to his name, which comes from a root that signifies praise and acknowledgment; and afterwards foretels the victories and conquests, as the prince and governor of his father's children, which he should obtain over his most formidable enemies; and were signally accomplished on a variety of occasions. But this pre-eminence and power, this prosperity and success, were to last only for a certain time, and till another scheme commenced. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

HERE men's fancies, prejudices, and interests, have applied these words to the most foreign purposes; while, taken in connection, and consistently with the analogy of the old and new testament, they appear easy, pertinent and conclusive. The word translated *sceptre* literally signifies that badge of royalty, or a shepherd's crook; which perfectly corresponds

to

to the idea of government, particularly among the Jews, whose supreme king and ruler was, by a peculiar phrase, called *the shepherd of Israel* *. The term *lawgiver* hath nothing equivocal in it: And both prerogatives were to be inherent in the tribe of Judah, till Shiloh came. *Shiloh* hath had significations put upon it beyond number †; but seems plainly to be derived from the Hebrew verb *Sbalah*, to be in tranquillity and rest, or from the noun, peace-maker ‡.

BUT who this Shiloh is, who should deprive Judah of the sceptre, and assume it himself, as the gathering of the nations to him imports, we have yet to resolve. Without the smallest degree of probability, some have proposed Moses, Saul, David, and Jeroboam, and others Nebuchadnezzar, and Vespasian, who finally destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem, and every vestige of an independent government in Palestine. The ancient Jewish divines were, unanimously, of opinion, that Shiloh was the *Messiah*, whose kingdom should be universal, and reign endless. And indeed, notwithstanding the many interruptions of the royal descent, and heavy chastisements for their rebellions, with which the people of God were visited; it was not till the days of Herod the *Idumean*, as was before mentioned, who filled their throne at our Saviour's birth; or rather of Titus and his father, about forty years after the ascension; that the sceptre was totally wrested from the hand of every Israelite; and hath never, on any occasion, been swayed in Canaan, or any where else, by any of the Jewish race.

* In multis locis. † Rabbi Bechai in Gen. xlix. 10. ‡ Aben-Ezra, in loco.

THIS circumstance, joined with a thousand other evidences, clearly demonstrates that the adorable person, whom we worship, is the Shiloh, the peace-maker, who was to be *sent*, as the name likewise imports; and whose coming should be the greatest glory and blessing of Judah, and of all Israel, though he should put an end to their temporal distinctions, and lay the foundations of another polity, on which the union of many nations, in the same moral and holy subjection, was to be raised.

MANY zealous modern Jews have been so hard pressed by this circumstance, that they have believed the most extravagant of all fables ever invented, to prove that the sceptre was still in the tribe of Judah, and would continue till the coming of their expected Messiah. They have been told, that there is a large province, between Persia and India, where there is a great multitude of Jews, governed by their own prince, descended from the tribe of Judah; some say, surrounded by a sabbatic river, others, by a wall of fire; and enjoy the greatest prosperity and plenty. This fiction is, evidently, propagated to evade the force of the prophecy now under our view. But that colony, and the Jewish sceptre, should have been placed in the moon, like the paradise before described, beyond the limits of our knowledge; as the best authorities convince us, that no such region exists on the face of our globe.

This is what Israel spake unto the twelve tribes; and when he had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost. Forty days were observed, in embalming his body with aromantick

aromatic drugs, and thirty in hardening it with salt and nitre; during which his family, after the Egyptian manner, mourned; and then proceeded for the land of his nativity, and the land of promise, with the most magnificent retinue of which we read, in any records of such remote antiquity.

If the faith of true believers in God, the assurance of inquisitive christians that their Saviour is the promised *Shiloh*, and the filial duty of children be strengthened and confirmed by the present instructions, the labour of explaining these pages will not have been in vain.

DISSERTA

and then, during which his family, after the E-
gyptian manner inquired; and then proceeded for
the land of his nativity, and the land of promise with
any records of their remote antiquity.

DISSERTATION XXXI.

is the faith of these believers in God, the assurance
of redemption, and that their Saviour is the pro-

Of the State and Policy of Egypt after the Death of
Jacob; and the Birth of *Moses*.

EXODUS I. and II.

THE illustrious founders of the Jewish nation, *Jo-
seph*, and all his brethren, and all that generation, in the
space of sixty years after the death of *Jacob*, died.
But the promises made to *Abraham*, and renewed to
Isaac and *Jacob*, were still remembered, and faithfully
accomplished, by their blessed author, in a manner
suitable to his own divine majesty. *Seventy souls*, as
Moses reckons, or as it is in the Septuagint, which
St. Stephen follows, *threescore and fifteen*, was the whole
number of the seed of *Jacob*, at his descent into E-
gypt. The difference between the two copies will
be reconciled, when we reflect, that, agreeable to the
genealogical lists in the chronicles*, *Ephraim* and
Manasseh had sons born to them in that kingdom;

* 1. Chron. vii. 14. & 20.

five, probably, before that event, whom the Septuagint take into the account, though the Hebrew leaves them out. From that small number, in two hundred and fifteen years, sprung six hundred thousand men able to bear arms, besides women and children*. If the rule was so early observed, that none should be called forth to war under twenty years of age, nor above sixty, reckoning all the rest, with all the women and old men, there could not be fewer than fifteen hundred thousand persons, or, agreeable to the former calculation, there might be two millions. Whether polygamy, winked at by the ruler of the world, or for the hardness of men's hearts, and the general corruption of their manners, tolerated, if any will insist it was, before the law; whether the profligation among women in Egypt; or any supernatural force at that time applied, were the causes of this extraordinary multiplication; it concerns us very little to enquire. It is sufficient that we see in this event, the truth of the divine promise to Abraham; *I will multiply thee exceedingly. Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; for so shall thy seed be.* Moses has only said, *that the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them.* The several words here used for the same thing, shew the extraordinary fecundity of the *Israelitish* women in Egypt; and a celebrated Rabbi †, hath expatiated largely upon all of them, and with the greatest propriety. The very ingenious remark some of his nation make upon the second word, which has been observed by one of our best commentators ‡, ought not to be unnoticed here. They think that

* Exodus xii. 37. † Abarbanel, in loco. ‡ Bp. Patrick.

the Hebrew * expresses the vast increase among fifties; and the same term is, in fact, employed in the blessing God pronounced upon them, at the twentieth verse of the first chapter of Genesis. It has been interpreted by a very learned and most laborious man; the Israelites were *born in multitudes* †. From the example of a wife of a certain citizen, who had *two and fifty children*, and never brought less than three at a birth ‡; and it's having been said that the Egyptian women themselves were so fruitful, that some of them at four births brought *twenty children* §; the notion has been indulged that the *Israelites* brought *six* at a time, by the extraordinary blessing of God upon them.

HOWEVER this was, and notwithstanding the advantages the kingdom might have derived from their population of it, the prosperity of this people soon became the subject of the strongest jealousy, and of the most alarming apprehensions in the minds of the Egyptians. Their habitations were not confined to *Goshen*, which grew too narrow for them. *All Egypt* was overspread with *Israelites*. They were now in a condition to determine the fate of the country; and, by joining with foreign enemies, to subdue their masters. This seems to have been the reason, or rather the plausible pretext, for the severities which they immediately experienced.

MOSES, indeed, says, *there rose up a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph*. This phrase has been variously understood: That this king had neither

* Heb. *רבו* — † Benedictus Arias Montanus: *Produxerunt se; nati sunt in multitudine.* ‡ Gaspar Schottus.

§ Aristot. *Histor. Animal. Lib. vii.*

known him, nor his father, nor any of his brethren; or, according to others, was indifferent about his history, and unmoved by the motives which had determined the conduct of his predecessors. The term *new* has inclined many interpreters to think, that Moses speaks of a foreign prince who had then conquered Egypt, and was ignorant of the remarkable occurrences in it's annals. It is true, after that kingdom had been governed for many ages, from the days of *Mizraim*, one of the sons of Ham, by princes born in the country, and of lineal descent, strangers from *Arabia* and *Phenicia* invaded it; and possessing themselves of *lower Egypt*, and *Memphis*, established a succession called *shepherd-kings*; who yet never penetrated into *upper Egypt*, nor affected the kingdom of *Thebes*. But this invasion was before the days of Abraham; who had his wife taken from him by one of that race; and the usurpation terminated under *Thethmosis*, who banished the *shepherd-kings*, and reigned over all Egypt, long before Joseph was carried down into that country, by the merchant-men. Hence a *new king*, in this passage, can only mean what has been above expressed; or, at most, one of another family, and a remote heir of that monarch, who had so kindly treated Joseph, and his father's house *. *Rameses miamum* is said to have been the name of that prince; who is known in scripture by that of *Pharaoh*, common to all the kings of Egypt †. He reigned sixty-six years, and made the Israelites undergo the vast hardships which Moses relates. *Behold*, said he to the Egyptians, *the people of the children of Israel are more and might-*

* Histoire des Egyptiens, par Rollin. † Archiepisc. Usserius. For the origin of it, quod iis commune erat, usque ad Babylon. Imper. Temp. see Spicileg. Jamesonii. Cap. i. p. 3.

iter uban the. Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join themselves to our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they set over them task-masters—and made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.

It well deserves to be remarked, that the fear of the Egyptians, *lest the Israelites should get them up out of the land*, must have arisen from what they had frequently heard, that their design was not to stay always in Egypt; that their fathers had only come down as sojourners, and had received a promise that their seed, after a certain period, should possess Canaan. And the nearer that period approached, the more, no doubt, they would be speaking of it.

JOSEPHUS* informs us, that his nation was employed by the Egyptians in cutting, and filling, many canals, with the waters of the Nile, in building mounds and ramparts to restrain the force of that river when it swelled, in erecting some of those monuments of madness, the Pyramids, in learning all sorts of arts, and in inuring themselves to the hardest labour. And Moses says, *they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pitbom and Raamses*: The former now thought to be Pelusium, the most ancient fortified place in Egypt, is called by Ezekiel†, *the strength of Egypt*; and by Suidas the monk, who knew the state of that country distinctly, in the reign of Alexius Comnenius, *the key of Egypt*, as it was the entrance from Syria: The latter gave name to the whole region where the Israelites dwelt, and probably was a frontier town

* Josephus, Lib. ii. Cap. v. † Chap. xxx. 15.

likewise,

likewise, on the side of Arabia. In those cities were corn and oyl, wine and other riches of Egypt, laid up, agreeable to the regulations which Joseph, during the years of plenty, had wisely introduced.

But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew: or, in the Hebrew Idiom, which the vulgate* has preserved, *as they afflicted them, by how much the more they oppressed them, by so much the more they grew, so they multiplied.* The Jewish historian† piously observes, on this occasion, that none can resist the will of God, whatever arts they devise. His power, evidently, supported that people in their deepest distresses, and blasted the schemes of their enemies, which they had barbarously contrived for their destruction. Not only their vast fruitfulness, threatening commotions within the state, alarmed and offended Pharaoh and his people; but we are likewise told, that one of the Egyptian teachers, called by the name of *scribe of the holy things*, and who passed among them for a great prophet, declared to the king that there would be born, at that time, an Hebrew child, whose virtue would be admired by all the world, who would exalt the glory of his own nation, humble Egypt, and possess immortal renown. To prevent this, as the same historian thinks, Ramestium, like bloody Herod at the birth of Christ, formed the design of murdering, as soon as it was born, every male-child among the Israelites; expecting thereby to defeat the prediction, and finally crush the whole seed. The mid-wives were to be his executioners. When they performed their office to the

* *Quantoque opprimebant eos tanto magis multiplicabantur, et creicebant.* † Josephus Lib. ii. Cap. v. ‡ Josephus, Lib. ii. Cap. v.

Hebrew women, they were commanded *to kill every son, and leave every daughter alive.*

But the mid-wives feared God; and the sanguinary mandate filled them with horror. The Egyptians of that profession would feel the sentiments of humanity; and regard for their nation, and a sense of religion, would restrain the Israelites. All of them disobeyed the king, and covered their pious rebellion with an innocent artifice. They said that the Hebrew women were *lively, easy in parturition, or skilful themselves like mid-wives, as the original insinuates**, and delivered before they could come to them. Whether this was a fact, as some have presumed, or an official falsehood, it is not easy to ascertain. There is, however, the clearest evidence, that God, in rewarding them for their conduct, approved of it: *He made them houses*: This, though one divine eminent at the Reformation †, and some others, are of a contrary opinion, must signify, that God either prospered them in riches and affluence, or, because they had saved the lives of the Hebrew children, increased the number of theirs. Which of these ways it was, or whether they told the whole truth, or suppressed a part of it, in some cases lawful, and even commendable, none have any right to condemn them, seeing God did not.

UNDER the operation of this barbarous order, Moses, by whom God was soon to manifest his power, and give effect to his promises, was born. His father and mother, Amram and Jochebed, were not only of the same tribe and family, but their consanguinity was so close, that interpreters have been greatly troubled

* Heb. כי תיות חנה

† Calvinus, in loco.

in explaining, how a nephew could ever lawfully marry his aunt. For the historian plainly tells us, that *Amram took him Jachbed, his father's sister to wife*. But, without taking the benefit of other similar examples in scripture, there is nothing very extraordinary in this match. To cut off all ground of cavilling from the profane querist, or infidel reader of the sacred books, we ought frankly to acknowledge, what has been before asserted, that the prohibitions concerning the degrees of affinity in marriage, are not so much founded on the original law of nature, as on a positive command from God. It is utterly impossible that he should ever have laid any of his creatures under the necessity of violating original obligations. But in the first ages, particularly near the creation, it was absolutely necessary, that not only relations of this proximity should marry one another, but that even brother and sister should enter into those bonds. It must, therefore, have only been in after times, for certain reasons which we may plainly see, and others perhaps we do not, that the degrees of kindred were prescribed. Hence good men need not be alarmed when they read of such marriages; nor unbelievers triumph because they are recorded; a positive law of God being of equal force with any of an eternal nature.

Of this marriage, Moses was the fruit. But to be born under such miserable circumstances, was only to die prematurely. For the king betrayed by the midwives, changed his measures, and charged all his people, especially his officers, saying, *every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save*

• Exodus vi. 20.

aliv.

alive. Amram and Jochebed, to preserve the innocent victim, *who*, according to St. Stephen, *was exceeding fair*, and some of the Jewish doctors say, *had an angelic form*, from the fury of his persecutors, contrived all possible means; and actually hid him *three months*. But Pharaoh's diligence, and that of his emissaries, could not be long eluded. The parents, accordingly, resolve to resign Moses, and commit him entirely to the care of providence. Of the rushes of the Nile, with which it's banks were planted, they constructed a cradle, to which they perhaps gave the form of those little boats, with which that river was continually covered; and, *daubed with pitch and slime*, the precious deposit was laid among the reeds, by the river's brink. Here the tender mother, the fond father, the affectionate sister, the humane heart, may indulge all their feelings, and curse that cruelty which authorized such a decree. Nor was Miriam, the sister of this wretched babe, unaffected on this occasion. She fixed her eyes closely on the place where her brother lay; and, while employed in this sorrowful office, believing, every moment, that he would immediately fall into the hands of his executioners, *Pharaoh's daughter*, either according to the rites of the Egyptian religion, or the custom of the great, *came down to the river to wash herself*; and was made signally subservient to the providential design.

THIS princess has been called *Thermutis**; and, said to have been married to a petty king of Egypt†; to have had no child; and, as a consolation for her barrenness, adopted the infant, whom she called *Mo-*

* Josephus Lib. ii. Cap. v. † Euseb. Præpar. Lib. ix. Cap. xxvii.

ses; from two Egyptian words which signify, *drawn out of the water*; and *instructed him in all the wisdom**, in all the arts and learning that flourished in that kingdom.

The heart of princes is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: And he turneth it whithersoever he will†. And, inspiring Pharaoh's daughter with tender feelings for this exposed infant, she, accordingly, no sooner saw the cradle than she ordered it to be brought to her; and, opening it, was struck with the child's beauty, and softened by it's tears. The princess easily knew, that he was an Hebrew infant, by the deplorable situation in which she found him, and the sacrament of circumcision which he had received. Miriam's offer, to find a nurse, was accepted, without delay. Like a dutiful child and sister, she related to Jochebed what had happened, who immediately run, and undertook with transports, which nature only knows, and words cannot express, the commission which *Thermutis* gave her, of nursing this out-cast for her.

IN the manner now represented did the Israelites fall into slavery in Egypt, and under the severest oppression and sufferings. But by these was the power of God rendered the more conspicuous, in their preservation and deliverance. The more cruelly they were treated, they increased the more, till they were numerous enough to be formed into a nation. Then Moses was born, strangely preserved, royally educated, and raised up to be their saviour. And shortly after his investiture with the divine commission, we

* Acts vii. 22.

† Proverbs xxi. 1.

shall see the vials of divine wrath poured forth, one one after another, upon the land of *Ham*: When *God made bare his arm*, or gave the most signal and striking demonstrations of his being and power, infinitely superior, not only to all human strength, but also to all the pretended deities, in which the Egyptians trusted.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XXXII.

Sketches of the Life of *Moses*, for eighty Years.

EXODUS II. and III.

THE history of that great man's life, though written by himself, seems to be very defective, from his birth till God appeared to him in the wilderness of Sinai, which comprehends a period of eighty years. We are only told, that *when the child grew, his mother brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son, by adoption.* There can, however, be no doubt that he was employed, during several years of his youth, in the acquisition of knowledge, becoming his distinguished condition, in a country so improved as Egypt was. Some authors give a detail of the sciences in which he was profoundly skilful; such as arithmetic and geometry, harmony, and the ratio of numbers one to another, medicine and musick. They tell us that he likewise understood symbolical philosophy, and was deeply instructed in practical astronomy:

shall see the vials of divine wrath poured forth, one one after another, upon the land of *Ham*: When God made bare his arm, or gave the most signal and striking demonstrations of his being and power, infinitely superior, not only to all human strength, but also to all the pretended deities, in which the Egyptians trusted.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XXXII.

Sketches of the Life of *Moses*, for eighty Years.

EXODUS II. and III.

THE history of that great man's life, though written by himself, seems to be very defective, from his birth till God appeared to him in the wilderness of Sinai, which comprehends a period of eighty years. We are only told, that *when the child grew, his mother brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son*, by adoption. There can, however, be no doubt that he was employed, during several years of his youth, in the acquisition of knowledge, becoming his distinguished condition, in a country so improved as Egypt was. Some authors give a detail of the sciences in which he was profoundly skilful; such as arithmetic and geometry, harmony, and the ratio of numbers one to another, medicine and musick. They tell us that he likewise understood symbolical philosophy, and was deeply instructed in practical

E e 2 astronomy:

astronomy : That he had for his masters the most famous among the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Greeks*. His skill in poetry is manifest from his majestic and beautiful compositions, suited to almost every occasion. Of his abilities as an orator and historian, we have also sufficient evidence in the writings that bear his name.

BUT, from what St. Stephen says, that *he was mighty in deed*, it, moreover, appears, that a part of the forty years which Moses staid in Egypt, was spent in more hardy and renowned exercises than study alone : And some of his exploits, which gave proofs of his courage and prudence, are actually recorded. Josephus himself says that he was, by the decision of an oracle, appointed general of the Egyptian army, which was sent to oppose that of Ethiopia†. And Philo Judæus affirms, that he not only recovered the cities which the former had lost, but likewise conquered the latter, led his troops into the heart of the country, and took the capital‡. That Moses himself does not mention those transactions, supposing them to be true, either in the writings which he might compose during his residence in Midian, or did set forth after he became the Jewish captain and lawgiver ; we will not wonder when we consider, that this would have been writing his own history only, without any connection

* Clemen. Alexand. Strom. Lib. i. p. 343. where the curious reader will find a fragment of a Jewish tragedy on this subject. But the good father was certainly misinformed in regard to the Greeks, among whom all science seems to have been unknown at this early period ; and till Orpheus the Thracian, and Cadmus the Phenician, carried it among them. The latter lived contemporary with *Josbua*. † Antiquit. judaic. Lib. ii. ‡ In Vita Moïsis.

with the plan of God's providence, which it is the united scope of scripture to represent, in an unbroken series; particularly in regard to the state of religion and virtue in all ages: And nothing more.

THE brilliant actions, and growing merit of this hero, and adopted son of the princess, would have procured for him the chief honors of the court of Egypt, if nobler designs had not obliged him to reject them. The high rank which he held in the house of Pharaoh, never once obliterated from his mind the humiliating circumstances in which he was born. Though raised to the most active and honorable posts which the government had to bestow, he still remembered that he was an *Hebrew*, and that his nation was in subjection. His own generous nature, and impressions from God on his mind, determined him to leave the palace, to visit his brethren in Rameses, to be an eye-witness of *the rigor with which they were made to serve*, and instantly give a presage of what God would one day work for them by his hands.

AFTER his arrival, the first thing he saw was an Egyptian smiting an Israelite. It is highly probable, that the oppressor was one of those task-masters, whom Pharaoh had appointed over the Jewish people; and who, under the pretence of fidelity to their prince, indulged their own cruelty and resentment by the sufferings of poor slaves. Moses shuddered at the sight, and, in a transport of indignation and rage, slew the Egyptian. The next day, when two of his countrymen were striving together, he endeavoured to reconcile them by suggesting that they were *brethren*,

ren, and in their circumstances intestine broils and dissensions, would inevitably weaken their interests, and obstruct their future prosperity. But this truly patriotic champion, while he hoped they would immediately comply with the friendly purpose, and jointly accept of his advice and proposal, shared the common fate of almost all who attempt either to succour the injured, or reconcile the contentious and unruly parts of mankind. *Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?* was the insolent and haughty challenge which he received. Finding the *thing was known*, that the passions of his brethren might, even unwarily, bring punishment upon him, and Pharaoh himself, notwithstanding his distinction and services, proceeding against him, for the capital offence of the death of one of his natural subjects; Moses fled to *Arabia Petraea*, on the other side of the red-sea; and about an hundred and twenty miles from *Zoan*.

THE circumstances in his journey, his conduct on the occasion related, and the reward he received for it, besides being simple, natural and credible, as every one will see in the account given of them by himself at large; are, likewise, so similar to the other histories of the patriarchal ages, especially in the book of *Genesis*, we shall not enter on description in this place. The great scarcity of water, in all those countries of the east, where the most important scenes were acted, in which the most eminent instruments of God's providence were employed, produced, in a great measure, at this time, by the appointment of God, the connection between Moses and Jethro, whose

whose daughters he had assisted in watering their flocks.

THIS man, by the title given him, seems to have been *prince* and *priest* of that place; or the supreme head and conductor of civil and religious affairs; in the same manner as the caliphs, after the death of Mahomet, were among the Saracens, in the same country; as the emperors of Japan, till very lately; and some of the Bishops of Germany are to this day.

JETHRO gave Moses, who was content to dwell with him, Zipporah his daughter, for a wife; by whom he had a son called Gershom, which signifies a *desolate stranger*. Whether this priest and prince was a worshipper of the true God, or of false deities, adored in Midian, and all the neighbouring countries; and whether he may be classed with those religious men described in the nineteenth dissertation; we can draw nothing, with certainty, from the opinions that have been given. Perhaps the contentment Moses had in dwelling with him, his acceptance of his daughter, and the account of his behaviour, after the Israelites had crossed the Red-sea, may favor the conclusion, that he had resisted the contagion of idolatry, which almost universally prevailed. This, at least, is clear, that Moses lived with Jethro for the space of forty years in the wilderness of Midian, where he followed the only occupation practicable in that country, at least that has been common till the present time. And, according to some learned men, he employed the leisure he had, in his profession, in composing some of those admirable books, particularly Genesis,

with

with which the world is now blessed, and which, we hope, will be preserved, as they have heretofore been, by a wonderful providence, till time shall be no more *.

WHILE Moses enjoyed this solitude, the sufferings of the Israelites increased, and their cries went up incessantly to heaven. Egypt had changed its king, during this period; but the sons of Jacob had only changed one tyrant for another, and were laid under a heavier yoke. *God heard their groaning, and looked upon them, and had respect unto them*; and, as was said already, raised up Moses to be their deliverer. His commission, for this purpose, was given him in a manner altogether majestic and divine. Feeding Jethro's flocks, he had one day led them to Horeb, which, probably, by way of anticipation, is called *the mountain of God*, because the law was afterwards to be published on Sinai, another top of the same ridge of rocks of which Horeb is a part. Here seeing a bush burning, without being consumed, he was astonished at the sight; and, approaching to take a nearer view of it, heard a voice coming from thence, which said; *Moses, Moses, draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*

THE design of such phenomena, and the person who spake from them, having been discoursed of at

* M. Huetii *Demonst. Evangel. prop. iv. cap. iii.* The book of Job, thought by some to have been composed by Moses, is, probably, of an older date, and was written by the sufferer himself. This matter, however, is uncertain; though the history is, undoubtedly, real. See *Dissert. xix. p. 298.*

great length already †, nothing more remains to be considered, in this place, but the circumstances of the appearance here related. These were purely symbolical: The bush represented the Israelites; the flames, which surrounded it, expressed the tribulations in which they were involved; and fire, of an unconsuming quality, besides proclaiming the divine presence, and distinguishing the vision from all the works of fancy, and the arts of imposture, signified, finally, that they should not, in the least degree, be wasted by their sufferings.

MOSES was commanded to *put off his shoes from off his feet*, in token of that respect with which every worshipper ought to be filled, and of the purity to be studied, when the Creator is solemnly approached. To this command, perhaps, the custom of eastern and southern nations, in subsequent ages, and of which there are strong vestiges to this day, may be referred, of putting off the shoes at the door of churches and mosques. Though the custom, by God's special command, may have been established before the days of Moses, and what he did was only in obedience to it, this is a certain evidence that he knew it was God with whom he was now conversing.

THAT conversation, on certain principles, admits strictures, and requires an explanation; but the bounds of this performance exclude them. We shall, therefore, for want of room, not of sufficient matter, proceed, from this part of the history, to the appear-

† See Dissertation xvii.

ance of Moses, and Aaron who was joined with him in the commission, before the King of Egypt, *where they shewed wonders, in the sight of all his people.*

The truth represented the likeness of the human mind, which furnished it, extracted the impressions in which they were involved, and the of an unerring ingenuity, delicate perceiving the divine, and distinguishing the vision from all the vision of fancy, and the art of improving, it is said, that they should not in the last degree, be misled by their feelings.

Moses was commanded to put off his shoes, as he lay in token of that respect which every worshipper ought to be due, and of the duty to be paid, when the Creator is solemnly approached. To this command, perhaps the custom of sitting and leaning on the ground, in the East, and of which there are strong vestiges to this day, may be referred, of putting off the shoes in the door of houses, and in the temple. Though the custom of God's special command, may have been of old, it is not to be denied, and what is only in order to it, this is a certain evidence that he knew it was God.

DISSERTA-

That conversation, on certain principles, is the first, and perhaps an explanation, of the words of the psalmist, *and the Lord shall be glorified in the way of his holiness, for what he hath not of himself, shall be of his power.*

The Lord shall be glorified in the way of his holiness, for what he hath not of himself, shall be of his power.

DISSERTATION XXXIII.

MOSES and AARON appear before Pharaoh; and bring Plagues upon Egypt.

EXODUS, V. &c.

AT the burning bush the Lord had said to Moses, *I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.* He had declared himself to be the God of their fathers; proclaimed his nature and perfections in those remarkable words, *I AM THAT I AM*, which have been highly respected for their majesty, by Jews, Pagans, and Christians; and commanded Moses to make him known, by that most absolutely perfect name and appellation of God, to
the

the people. To obviate their unbelief, and convince Pharaoh himself that the demand to release the Israelites was made by divine authority, God had armed Moses with the power of working miracles: The instant conversion of *his rod into a serpent*, and instant restoration; *his hand immediately becoming leprous, or white, as snow*, and changing again as *his other flesh*, were specimens only of what he should perform.

FURNISHED with this commission, Moses prepared himself to leave Jethro's house, and to approach Egypt, where *all the men were dead who sought his life*; at the same time he was assured by God, that Pharaoh would disregard his message. Aaron, who was an eloquent man, and to *be instead of a mouth to Moses*, in this arduous undertaking, met him, by divine instruction, very near Midian, *in the mount of God*, that they might have the more time to deliberate on the commission, before they entered Egypt. On their arrival there, *they assembled the elders of Israel, and Moses did the signs in the sight of the people; who bowed their heads and worshipped, because the Lord had looked on their affliction, and had visited them.* Then, addressing the king, they told him, *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.*

INSTEAD of provoking him, by demanding abruptly the liberty of that people, it is observable that those holy men took the method which prudence suggested to soften the Prince into compliance with their request. They only begged permission to carry out the Israelites three days journey into the wilderness, where they might offer sacrifices to their God,
which

which might be displeasing to the Egyptians, in their own land. And if they failed to pay him that homage, they represented that he might visit them with plagues, which might prove fatal to the whole kingdom. Of this conduct we have many examples in other passages of scripture; particularly where we see Samuel, agreeable to the command of God, going to Bethlehem, and telling the elders of the town, who trembled at his coming, that he was come to sacrifice to the Lord; which was only a part of his design, the main purpose being to anoint that son of Jesse, of whom the Lord should signify his choice, in the room of Saul, who was rejected for his disobedience*. Our blessed Saviour himself used the greatest caution and circumspection, in his dealings with obstinate and unworthy men. This seems to be a principle of the soundest wisdom, as it is the safest and most effectual method of proceeding, in enterprises that cross men's affections, their passions, and wordly interests. And so far as the relation goes, there is not the least violation of truth.

BUT Pharaoh's answer, suitable to his character, was; *who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* From this speech, impious as it is, we are not to infer, that Pharaoh, though he was an idolater, disbelieved the existence of an eternal and supreme being. Atheism was not the system in Egypt, nor ever established in any kingdom on earth. All nations have had their Gods, though frequently they have been *vanities* and *lies*. But having, like the rest of mankind at that time, adopted tutelary deities founded on fiction,

* 1 Samuel, chap. xvi.

and formed to their own fancies, the God of the Hebrews, the living and true God, was UNKNOWN to the Egyptians. And besides that the rites of his religion were not established by law within Pharaoh's dominions, the wretched condition of those who ascribed to him supreme honors, would inspire that haughty prince with no high idea of his majesty and power; especially as the prosperity and adversity of the votaries, fixed in men's imagination, at that time, the greatness and might, or the impotence and weakness of the several divinities which they adored.

RESISTING so powerful an argument as that of religion, and urged, by Moses and Aaron, in such a becoming and dutiful manner, we need not wonder if Pharaoh should add to his impiety the most cruel oppression. Instead of diminishing the sufferings of such a vast number of unhappy men, he, accordingly, increased the weight of that yoke under which they had so long groaned. The laziness of the people, he alledged, made them fond of celebrating festivals, and that, in order to rouse them, their tasks must be doubled. For this purpose, the straw which they had mixed in their bricks, or with which they had covered them from the sun, was no longer to be supplied, and yet the same quantity to be made, and in the same manner. In vain did the sons of Jacob represent the impossibility of fulfilling an order so severe! In vain did they complain of this tyranny! The tears which their miseries extorted from them served only to augment the stream; their very sighs were construed crimes. Their bodies, worn out with this barbarous service, were galled with the scourge of a merciless superintendant. They must sink under the weight
of

of their work, or the severity of their punishment, if they were not able to perform it.

AT this critical period, as the case has been often, instead of recurring for consolation and deliverance to God, when there was all the reason in the world to despair of either from their earthly masters, the Israelites reproached his servants, and ascribed their growing sorrows to their folly and misconduct. Moses himself, as well as on other similar occasions, cannot be fully excused, for such bold addresses to the Almighty; *O Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this people? Wherefore is it that thou hast sent me?*

Now, when reasonings, and proper conclusions from them, were rejected and overlooked, by subjects enslaved, as well as by their oppressive prince; and the patience and compassion of God to be equally exercised, towards his murmuring people, and his distrustful ministers; miracles were necessary, and such as should greatly terrify the one, and establish the other in their faith. But, before they were displayed, *the Lord, in undeserved and peculiar condescension, said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: For with a strong hand shall he let the people go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land: I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.* This cannot signify that those patriarchs were ignorant of this name of God, which expresses not only his eternal existence and immutable truth, but also his omnipotent power; for the whole book of Genesis, in Hebrew, testifies the contrary; and, therefore, must mean,

mean, that though he was known to them as Jehovah when they *received* his promises, he had not yet been known by that name, in *giving* those promises effect; but would now employ him (i. e. Moses) for that purpose, and manifest his power, *by signs and wonders*, to shew that his providence and faithfulness were still the same.

By *signs and wonders*, in holy writ, are meant all such operations, as it is above the skill of man to contrive, above the power of any thing in nature, any thing but the God of nature himself, or some agent by him specially commissioned, and impowered, to perform. These things, being intended to *signify* who are appointed by God, as the messengers of his will to men, are, on that account, fitly termed *signs*; they are *wonders* also, as they are out of the ordinary phenomena, and surpass the abilities of mortals: And of *these* the holy scripture every where speaks, as the most proper and full evidence of a divine mission and authority.

WHAT the common sense and reasoning of mankind has been on this head, will appear from this single reflection; that all religions, whether true or false, not only those of Moses and Christ, but even the heathenish superstitions of every kind, have, at their first appearance, given countenance to themselves, by real, or pretended, miracles. Numa, at Rome, Amida and Brama, in the east, and Mango-Copal in Peru, did, as historians inform us, thus endeavour to persuade their followers into a belief of those *religions*, and civil opinions, which they introduced, and into the practice of their several sacred rites and ceremonies.

Even

Even *Mahomet* himself is said to have made some faint attempts this way, though, when he missed of success, he retreated to the great and standing miracle of the *Koran*, which was, he said, sent immediately from heaven to him by the angel *Gabriel**.—So that miracles have been secretly and unanimously agreed upon by all men, as the proper medium of proving any religion to be of divine appointment; else, the founders of all religions would not thus indifferently have appealed to them; nor would they, who embraced those religions, have so universally surrendered themselves up to their authority.—The objection, against this argument, which the enemies of revelation have made use of, That since *all* religions have, at their first rise, equally pretended to miracles, this way of proof, which hath so often deceived men, can never, with any certainty, be relied on, we pretend not to answer here; as the work is designed for another class of readers, and matters more important are still before us †.

Signs and wonders were, accordingly, made to Pharaoh demonstrations that the commission, by which Moses and Aaron acted, was divine. With that rod, the virtue of which had originally conquered the obstinacy of the former, and convinced the latter, and all Israel, that he was sent, by the God of their fathers, for their deliverance from bondage, they made the king of Egypt feel the weakness of his own sceptre. Of it's figure, and the inscriptions on it, certain Rabbins have told ridiculous stories; and some heathen

* See the *Koran*, by Geo. Sale gent. vol. 1. p. 19. 175.

† But see Dr. Atterbury, the Bp. of Rochester's sermon, on this subject; whence the foregoing reasoning has been extracted; with alterations.

writers have related, that it was placed in the temple of *Isis*, where the Egyptians paid it religious honors. However this was, we may draw the conclusion from this circumstance, that it's operation was known by the Gentiles; and see that *profane history* supports the records of the *sacred*. When those two messengers of the most high, venerable by their years, the one fourscore, and the other fourscore and three, and still more to be feared for the consequences of their commission to him, which they now repeated, to give the Jewish people their liberty, and put an end to a cruel slavery which they had long endured, came into Pharaoh's presence the second time; he, agreeable to the common sense of mankind, demanded of them *a miracle*, which might equally prove that the God who sent them claimed his submission, and that they were really his servants: *And Aaron casting his rod before him, and before his servants, it immediately became a serpent.*

PHARAOH, who was well accustomed to see the works of magic, was yet very little concerned, and, to confront them with Moses and Aaron, only sent for the practitioners in that art, with whom Egypt abounded. In this he followed the established rule of the ancients, who always determined any dispute among enchanters by the nature of the miracles they performed. According to the Pagan system, the greatest miracles were wrought by the greatest genii and gods*.

* Vide Gaulmyn, de vita Mosi, page 241.

DISSERTATION XXXIII. 435

THOSE magicians, the chief of whom might be *Jannes and Jambres**, neither refused, nor seem to have been afraid, to enter the lists with such competitors, whom, it is said, they told, that to bring enchantments into Egypt was like carrying water to the sea. *They cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents.* The only superiority which Aaron had over them, at this time, was, that *his rod swallowed up theirs*; and thus deprived them of the symbols and instruments of their power. The like success those magicians had, in turning the waters of the Nile into blood, which stank, and killed the fish; and in the bringing up frogs upon the land; but, at the fourth miracle, wrought by Moses and Aaron, they said to Pharaoh, *This is the finger of God*; and, after the seventh, could no longer stand before those holy men, because of the boyl, which was upon the magicians, as well as upon all the Egyptians.

HERE, we must confess it to be the most difficult task, to account for that amazing power of working miracles, at least things very wonderful to us, in men who were confessedly the followers of false gods. In regard to this, the learned may be divided into two classes; those who think that what the magicians did were mere prestiges, illusions, or tricks, performed by dexterity and slight of hand, and believed to be real only through the weakness and prepossession of men's

* 2. Tim. iii. 8. An old fragment said, that Jannes and Jambres, were the scribes of holy things among the Egyptians—flourished at the time the Jews left Egypt—were equal to any in the secrets of magic—and unanimously chosen to oppose Moses, the captain of that people, whose prayers were powerful with God. Euseb. Prepar. Lib. iii.

minds; and those who ascribe such works to secrets in the art of magic, and the concurrence of demons.

IN opposition to the first class, it has been alledged, that the relation of Moses leaves no room to doubt, that the operations abovementioned were effects of the magical art, and of some diabolical interposition. He hath used no other terms, indeed, than those he would have done, though his intention had been to signify, that those rods which the enchanters brought with them were really turned into serpents. But it is to be considered, that the language of scripture is frequently accommodated to the received opinions of former ages; that it appears to adopt the very prejudices of men; and seldom is employed in philosophical disquisitions. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the book of Joshua*, where the *sun and moon* are said, expressly, to have *stood still*. We may, therefore, still suppose that those who are here called *wise men and sorcerers*, were only jugglers, who pretended real miracles. Indeed the words by which they are denominated in the original scriptures, and used by the best translators of those scriptures, strongly countenance this opinion.

As a farther confirmation of this, and in opposition to those who ascribe the works of the magicians to secrets in the art of magic, and the concurrence of evil spirits; it has, with great probability, been said, that the power of working miracles is the prerogative of the Almighty alone, and when they are performed by any of his servants, as instruments in his hand, they are incontestible evidences of his presence and

* Chap. x.

pleasure. A real miracle being the interruption, inversion, or total change of the established course of nature, it is, beyond all question, most reasonable to believe that nothing in the universe can effect either, but *the finger* of him who is the creator of it.

BUT it will be asked, what respect is due to history*, which gives us accounts of enchantments and prodigies, whether real or imaginary, in all ages. Certain testimonies from thence, some men will regard as superior to all argumental opposition; while, with others, the very best testimonies will have as little weight, at present, to convince them that ever there were such things, as the strongest assurances would have had, in former ages, to convince the superstitious part of mankind, that all the exhibitions of sorcery, which they beheld, were the effects of imposture and credulity. To avoid scepticism and error, we may, then, adopt this sober sentiment, that men exquisitely skilled in arts, which they had long practised, availed themselves of the ignorance of the people; and because their knowledge, though perhaps not very extensive, far exceeded that of the rude multitude, they pretended, and were believed, that it was supernatural. Of this many instances, even in modern times, might be given, after all the improvements which natural processes, and the human understanding, have received. The fanciful figures, and uncouth incantations, used in all such practices, are sufficient to disparage and confute them.

As to what is said of the magicians in Egypt, it may be justly doubted whether their rods were converted

* In this argument, Oracles are not concerned.

into real serpents, as they appear to have been quite inert, when the rod of the Hebrew prophet moved towards them, *and swallowed them up*. It is equally doubtful whether they had any influence over the waters, *which Moses had previously turned into blood*, seeing they could give no assistance to Pharaoh, in restoring those waters to their former state; or any share in the *bringing up of the frogs*, which they could not remove from *the houses, and bed-chambers, and beds of Pharaoh, and his servants, and of the people*, as the king seems to expect they would have done, when *he called for Moses*, and besought him to *intreat the Lord, that he might take them away*. And very soon after, when other miracles were introduced, and various operations in the clouds and the air, toward which no concurrent natural causes, in the power of a mere man, could possibly be applied, they relinquished their own pretences, and acknowledged *the finger of God*.*

WHILE, therefore, those magicians only juggled, and exercised their fictitious art to it's utmost extent, Moses and Aaron were the ministers of Jehovah, who shewed his matchless power in the waters, on man and beast, and in the firmament above, that he might spare, and not destroy, Pharaoh and his people, and work obedience in the heart of that proud and obstinate prince, which he himself, and not God, had har-

* If any should think that Pharaoh could not possibly be deceived. and that the magicians wrought real miracles, they must yet acknowledge that those men, having no power of their own, must have been assisted by God, who in the end shewed them their folly.

dened

dened*. The annihilation of *their* rods, the corruption of *the* water, in all *the* streams, rivers, ponds, and pools of it, the miraculous multiplication of odious reptiles, and their direction to unfrequented places, from which they could not, by art, be banished, might have convinced the magicians that their power was vain; and, in effect, they confessed it was. But till the most noisome vermin, swarms of flies, the murrain and death of cattle of all kinds, together with sores and diseases on themselves, were brought forth and inflicted, those designing and self-interested men never deserted their post. Then *the* Lord God of *the* Hebrews commanded his servant Moses to stand before Pharaoh, and say, if thou wilt not let my people go, that they may serve me, I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; or, thou shalt feel my power in the severest manner; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth. While the pestilence raged, after a day's notice, that he might send, and save all his cattle, and all that he had in the field, the Lord caused it to rain a very grievous hail, attended with thunder, and fire mingled with the hail, such as hath not been known in Egypt, since the foundation thereof. The locusts, which covered the face of the earth so that one could not see the earth, followed; and eat the residue of that which remained from the hail, and every tree which grew out of the field. They also filled the houses of Pharaoh, and the houses of all his servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians. Before them there were no such locusts,

* It is astonishing to every attentive reader of the scriptures, how the expression, *God hardened Pharaoh's heart*, should ever have been misunderstood, and so erroneously applied—Indeed our common translation of it is very arbitrary.

neither

neither after them shall there be such. Thick darkness, for three days, ensued over all the land of Egypt; while the children of Israel, in Goshen, and in all other places, had light in their dwellings; in like manner as the other plagues had never reached them.

WHEN Pharaoh's heart was so far softened, that he would have let the people go with their little ones, if they would let their flocks and their herds stay, as hostages for their return, or a recompence for his loss of them, only one miracle, or plague, more was necessary. It had been said to Pharaoh, at the beginning, thus saith the Lord, *Israel is my son, even my first born. Let my son, therefore, go that he may serve me: And if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first born**. Now was the time for the execution of this threatening. The first born in the land of Egypt, both of man and of beast were, accordingly, slain, while the Israelites remained, as before, in peace and safety.

AN angel was the awful executioner; whether a good or bad is equally uninteresting to us, and difficult to be known. That it was the latter, a passage in the psalms, where *evil angels* are mentioned, seems to make the opinion probable. But instead of *evil angels*, almost every commentator has observed, that, without any violence to the original, the words may be as well rendered *messengers of evil*. That angel, who executed the divine judgments upon Egypt, appeared, perhaps, in a visible form, the more effectually to inspire the tyrants, with a sacred dread of the God who declared himself in favour of the Jewish people. Moses and Aaron, by stretching out their arms, as signals for the miracles that went before, had

* Chap. iv. 22. 23.

conferred, as it were, new powers upon nature: But when the last, and most terrible, of all the plagues was to be inflicted upon the devoted people, God himself was more immediately the executioner. *The first born of Egypt* were to be the victims; and the scourge was general. Neither the masters, nor the slaves, the prince, nor the subject, men nor beasts were excepted. For says the sacred text, *there was not a house where there was not one dead*. Whether by the general expression, we are to understand all the *first born*, in every case and denomination, so that fathers and mothers, as well as the first son or daughter, might be the objects of this decree, or only the first born in each house, the interpreters of scripture are not agreed. Though it were carried to it's utmost extent, the doctrine would be justified by it's analogy to the Hebrew ritual, which *consecrated to the Lord all that first opened the womb, both of man and of cattle*, in commemoration of this deliverance.

UNDER such a sudden and dreadful calamity, the Egyptians would immediately invoke their gods, and expect assistance from them. But their gods also were involved in it, and their idols overthrown. *And against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord*. We afterwards read, that *the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had smitten among them**. Hence it is probable, that those beasts which were their principal deities, Apis, Mnevis, and such like, no doubt the first-born of cattle, or idols representing them, were likewise destroyed. Some of their own ancient writers confess, that, in one night, all these were thrown down, and broken in pieces.

And, in after times, the same threatenings were denounced; *behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Pharaoh shall melt in the midst of it**. I will kindle a fire in the house of the gods of Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar shall burn them, and carry them away captives: He shall break also the images of Beth-shemish, or the statues of Heliopolis, the city of the sun; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire†. And, insulting the false divinities, it is said, *declare ye among the nations, publish, and set up a standard, publish and conceal not; say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces‡*. Dagon also fell down before the ark of the Lord of Hosts, and had his hands and his feet broken off from the trunk§. Let the enlightened mind, and the generous heart here drop a tear, that ever human nature should have fallen so low, as to trust in those gods that are no saviours, and can neither support nor protect themselves!

THIS fatal catastrophe was still heightened by the season in which the Almighty appointed it to happen. *At mid-night I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sits on the throne, unto the first-born of the captive that is in the dungeon; and all the first-born of the cattle*. Darkness, which covers all pleasing objects, and clothes every thing in the most gloomy colours, increased the terror, which tumult and confusion had excited. Pharaoh, and his court, heard the alarm, and saw their misery and danger: When the King sent for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, *rise up, and get you forth from among*

* Isaiah xix. 1.

† Jer. xliii. 12. 13.

‡ Jer. l. 1.

§ Sam. v. iii.

my people, both you and the children of Israel; and go, and serve the Lord as ye have said. And lest the destroying angel should still proceed in the bloody vengeance, he farther added, Take also your flocks, and your herds, and be gone; and bless me also.

THUS, by a strong band, were the Israelites brought out of slavery, with which they had been oppressed, during the long reign of Rameffes-Miamum, and a part of that of his eldest son Amenophis, who, according to some *, was the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red-sea; or, according to others †, during the reign of Sefostris, whose vast improvements in Egypt history describes ‡, in which he employed strangers, and a part of the reign of his son Phero, so like the name we have in the scriptures. The character given of this last prince by Herodotus, makes it very probable that it was he, with his army, who was overthrown in the pursuit after the Israelites §. That historian informs us of one action, which shews how far he had degenerated from the magnanimity of his father, the greatest prince of Antiquity. At an extraordinary overflow of the Nile, when it rose above eighteen cubits, Phero was so enraged, that he threw a javelin into the river for its correction.

THOSE two periods fixed on, make no great difference in chronology; as in the general list of the kings of Egypt, from the foundation of the empire, we find, that Rameffes-Miamum, Amenophis, Sefostris, and Phero stand next to each other *. But there is

* Ufferii Chron. Sacr. † Le pere Tournemine. ‡ Diodor. Sicul. § Voyez Hist. Ancienne des Egyptiens, par. M. Rollin. p. 103. * Vide, Herodot.

the fullest evidence, that it was the last of those monarchs who perished on the impious march. His accession to the throne of his father is placed in the two thousand five hundred and forty-seventh year of the world*, and the departure from Egypt, according to scripture chronology, was two thousand five hundred and fifty-six years after the creation. Hence that event falls into the ninth year of Phero's reign.

* Voyez. Rollin Hist. Egyp. who follows Herodotus.

DISSERTATION XXXIV.

Of the Institution of the PASS-OVER; and the Israelites borrowing of their Neighbours the Egyptians.

EXODUS, XI. and XII.

FROM the circumstances of this history, it appears, that some days, a week or more, elapsed, between the revelation to Moses, that all the first-born of Egypt should be slain, and the execution of that terrible judgment. For, after the threatening had been denounced, we read, that he and Aaron were commanded to *Speak unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, in the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, from the sheep or the goats, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb from an house—it is the Lord's Pasover.* This they were to kill, and with the blood of it mark the two side-posts, and the upper door-post of their houses, that the blood might be a token where they were, and the plague should not come, when the destroying

destroying angel smote *the land of Egypt*. And this may signify to us who are christians, the necessity and efficacy of the blood of that *lamb* who was, in the purpose of God, *slain from the foundation of the world**, and *without the shedding of which there is no remission*†. By a figure, very usual in scripture, not only the feast, but the lamb itself, was called the pass-over, from an Hebrew, or rather a Chaldaic word, which strictly signifies to overlook or pass by, in allusion to the mercy and protection which the sight of the blood brought them, from the avenger.

On the night of the fifteenth of *Abib* this feast was to be celebrated; a night of terror and death to the descendants of *Ham*; between whom and Israel *the Lord put a difference, that he might multiply his wonders in the land of Egypt*. In another passage †, it is true, the fourteenth day is mentioned: But the reason of this is, the lamb was then killed, to be ready against the evening, which, at six o'clock, was the beginning of a new day with the Israelites. The meaning of the word *Abib*, notwithstanding much enquiry about it, is not yet distinctly known. This month has also been called *Nisan*, which, a learned critic § tells us, signifies *banner*, because at that season of the year armies were wont to take the field. On this account, no doubt, the heathens called it *Mars*, after that fabulous deity, who, they believed, excited and presided over wars. We, borrowing the name from them, call it *March*. This month, ever after, continued to be the first of the *ecclesiastical* year among the Jews, as *Tisri*, or *September*, was that of the *civil*. Four

* Revel. xiii. 8.

† Heb. ix. 22.

‡ Levit. xxiii. 5.

§ Bocharti Hieroz. pars. i. lib. ii.

DISSERTATION XXXIV. 447

other divisions of time, seldom referred to in scripture, need not be mentioned here.

THE lamb to be sacrificed, of which the flesh was to be eaten, was at least to be *eight days* old, and not above *a year*; provided on the tenth day of the month, and the intermediate space employed in examining its soundness and purity; for it was to be *without blemish*.—Twelve blemishes are enumerated in the law of God * which rendered this lamb, or any other beast, unworthy of acceptance. In this part of the institution there is great moral significance, namely, that every thing his creatures have, in the utmost perfection, ought to be devoted to God, as every thing is from his bounty, and depends upon his power. Our view is, likewise, directed to the great redeemer of mankind, and the glorious antitype, who is called *the lamb without spot and blemish* †, whose oblation was sufficiently meritorious to reconcile heaven and earth, and supersede all future sacrifices.

THE flesh of this lamb was to be roasted with fire, which, like most of the other circumstances, is supposed, and by men of profound erudition ‡ almost demonstrated, to have been appointed in opposition to the practices of idolaters, and their enormous superstitions and profanities. The Egyptians, we are informed, constantly boiled, and never roasted, the animal offerings which they presented to the *Horæ*, or hours, by them regarded as goddesses.

It was not to be *eaten raw*; that is, as a Jewish interpreter § understands it, agreeable to the *Jerusalem*

* Levit. xxii. † i. Peter i. 19. ‡ Spen. de leg. Heb. § Maimonides.

version, *half roasted*, when some of the blood still remained in the flesh; but to be thoroughly dressed, in opposition to the feasts of *Bacchus*, where women and old men, intoxicated with wine, tore, amidst streams of blood, the throbbing flesh of victims offered to that god, whom, on that account, they sometimes called *the god that feeds on raw flesh* *. And since those feasts of *Bacchus* had their origin in Egypt †, the opinion seems to have a very strong foundation.

THE whole sacrifice was, likewise, to be eaten at once, at least none of it preserved till another day: An ordinance not peculiar in the case of the Pass-over; it extended to all solemn oblations, except those of *free-will*, some part of which might be kept till the day after, and if not eaten then, it was on the third day to be burnt with fire †. This law might be, also, directed against that superstitious practice of the heathens, of keeping fragments of their sacrifices in their houses, under a belief that they would bring them great advantages §.

Neither shall ye break a bone thereof, was another command of God, concerning this sacrifice; perhaps to condemn the votaries of the aforementioned deity,

* Illic inter ebrias puellas, & vinolentos senes, cum scelerum pompa præcederet, alter nigro amictu teter, alter ostenso anguinæ terribilis, alter cruentus ore, dum viva pecoris membra discerpit, &c. Vide Jul. Firm. de Error. profan. relig. p. 10. Castellan. de Festis Græc. p. 83. Et Spencer, de lege paschatis, lib. ii. cap. iv. p. 265. — Reges gentiles ira solebant facere — Accipiebant animal, & abscindebant illi membrum aliquod, ac postea comedebant illud. Maim. Mor. Nevoch. pars. iii. cap. xlviii. p. 496. † Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 49. ‡ Levit. vii. 16. 17. § Casaub. lib. iii.

who, in the celebration of their mysteries, exhibited every mark of brutality and distraction. They crowned themselves with serpents; gave way to the most frightful agitations, that they might appear more strongly influenced by the god; eat the raw flesh of the beasts they offered; and brake all their bones. Thus, as the illustrious author*, already cited, has laboured to shew, may the rites of the Pass-over be opposed to the superstitions of the Pagans; and the institution be considered, a deliverance from idolatry, as well as from bondage†. At the same time it ought not to be overlooked, that the prohibition of *breaking the bones* of the paschal lamb, typified and prefigured one circumstance attending the death of our blessed Saviour, seeing an apostle‡ has expressly remarked it.

AFTER all these requisites were observed, the worshippers at the first Pass-over were to eat the sacrifice with *their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands*; because they were *in haste*, and dispatch was necessary in their difficult and perilous situation. They were, moreover, to join with it *unleavened bread, and bitter herbs*, partly to remind them of their hardships in Egypt, and partly to commemorate such an unexpected rescue from captivity, that they had not time to prepare sweeter and more savory provisions. And for *seven days* after this feast, no *bread* but *unleavened* was to be found in their houses.

IN Egypt the Israelites killed the paschal-lamb in their own houses; out of which none of the flesh was

* Spencerus de Rit. Heb. Tom. 1. lib. ii. cap. iv. sect. ii. p. 264. † See the paraphrase of Jonathan, in loco. ‡ St. John xix. 36.

to be carried: But, if one family was too small to consume it, another next to that was joined, and the company, making a fit number of souls, eat it altogether. The tradition among the Jews is, that it was necessary ten at least, and not more than twenty, should partake in one place.

EVERY person circumcised, whether a natural Jew, or a stranger, a free-man or a slave, must observe this rite. Whether women, who had not undergone the initiating operation, were likewise obliged, cannot be determined by the law itself. At the great feasts, they were not required to go up to Jerusalem in after ages; that command respected only the males. It is certain that they were indispensibly obliged, during the days prescribed, to abstain from leavened bread, to eat bitter herbs, and suspend all sorts of work. Nor is it at all improbable, that many of the women, though they were not expressly commanded, went to Jerusalem, at the celebration of the Pass-over, and even eat of the lamb; as of the other sacrifices, evidently of the *beave-offerings*, and the *wave-offerings* of their own gifts, the daughters of Israel, as well as the sons, not in a state of uncleanness, were partakers*. While the tabernacle was in Shiloh, *Hannah*, with her husband, went yearly thither†, and offered sacrifice, and, there is little doubt, shared of the feast, which might be that in the mouth of *Abib*. *David*, when he had made an end of offering burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, dealt among all the people, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine‡; the very offerings which he had last made.

* See Numbers xviii. 2. † 1 Sam. i. 4. ‡ 2 Sam. vi. 19.

DISSERTATION XXXIV. 451

CONCERNING children, nothing has been prescribed, and the Jews have, accordingly, disputed this point with one another. Some of them have said, that seven years qualified, the circumcised, for the participation of this sacrifice; ten have been the term of others; and twenty the last standard which has been set up*.

ALL Israel, therefore, who were circumcised, clean from legal defilements, and could come to the place of sacrifice, were indispensibly required to observe this ordinance, at the time appointed, *according to all the rites, and the ceremonies of it.* But because there were certain men, when it was observed the second time, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the Pass-over on that day, the Lord, therefore, spake unto Moses, saying, if any of you, or of your posterity, shall be unclean, by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off; he shall yet keep the Pass-over unto the Lord; but it shall be on the fourteenth day of the second month at even, according to all the ordinances of the Pass-over †. The divine lawgiver, in great wisdom and compassion, fixed those terms; and none but he could alter them. With regard to another institution, it was ranked among the crimes of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, that he ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month; like unto the feast that was in Judah, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, which was that of tabernacles; and offered upon the altar, which he had made in Bethel, and burnt incense, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart ‡. If Hezekiah's sacrifice be made an objection §, it ought to be remembered, that the profanations of

* Menoch. de rep. Hebr. lib. iii. p. 259. † Numb. ix. 6. &c. ‡ 1 Kings xii. 32. 33. § 2 Chron. xxix.

Ahaz his father having unhallowed the temple, the good prince, of his own free will and accord, as soon as the house of God was cleansed and repaired, to avert the divine displeasure from him and his people, entered into covenant with him. And the same has been done by others on similar occasions.

NOR were the Jews more strictly confined to certain seasons, than they were careful to watch their approach; especially the time of the Pass-over, after they were settled in the holy land. Their Sanhedrim usually sent two men, to the western borders of Judæa, who announced, with the utmost speed, the appearance of the new moon, which regulated all their months. And since their last and great dispersion, when the temple was destroyed, they yearly print a calendar, which shews the changes of that luminary, the four seasons of the year, and every other period in which their religion is concerned*.

THE Paschal-lamb, as has been said, was, at first, slain, and eaten in the common houses of the Israelites in Egypt, who had not, nor would they have used, the privileges of the temples, in that country, for public religious service. In the same manner our blessed Lord celebrated its holy succedaneum, his own supper, in an upper room, without any regard to the splendor of those buildings which are reared at the common charge. This victim, as well as all others, was, afterwards, sacrificed in the *tabernacle*, the established residence of the Almighty with his people. And when the *temple* was finished, that was the place where all sacrifices were to be offered.

* M. Saurin. Disc. xlviii. M. Bafnage, Histoire de Juifs.

Crowds innumerable, accordingly, assembled at the holy city, on all solemn occasions, particularly at the Pass-over, for the reason before assigned. With a view to convince Nero of the strength of the Jewish nation, which he affected much to despise, we are told, that Cestius begged the priests to contrive a method of finding out the number of people that might be at Jerusalem itself, at a time. For this purpose, they chose that of the Pass-over, when they reckoned the lambs, which amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand, and six hundred; consequently, each of them having been, by the law, appointed for ten persons, and frequently there were more, the total must have been two millions five hundred and fifty-six thousand souls at least, all males.

HAVING thus described this holy rite, which was one of the Jewish sacraments, with all the particulars in the original institution, and the future observance of it; we shall now consider the conduct of the Israelites towards the Egyptians, on the days preceding the Pass-over, and the manner in which they left them. Those, as they were commanded, *borrowed of these people, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required; and they spoiled the Egyptians.* This, by some, has been reckoned an horrid crime; a disparagement of the legislator's morals to persuade his people to such a piece of villainy; and of his sense to relate the command. But, notwithstanding the affected zeal of infidels, to support what they call truth and rectitude, nothing will be found in their arguments, on this fact, but chicane and buffoonery.

Happily

Happily for the world, those men prove wretched reasoners, and appear less than half-learned, when they vilify revelation, which displays God's sovereignty over the world, in the righteous and uncontrollable exercise of his own glorious perfections. For,

INSTEAD of *they borrowed*, the word may as well be translated *they asked* *; and instead of *they lent unto them*, it would be a juster version, *they let them have* †. And the fact itself justifies this interpretation. The Egyptians had been thoroughly terrified at what had happened among them, by the ministry of Moses; especially at the last dreadful plague upon all their *first-born*. They were, therefore, willing to grant the Hebrews every thing that they demanded, and even to bribe them for their own future safety; for, said they, *we are all dead men*.

BESIDES, the Almighty had an incontrovertible right to transfer that property from one people to another; and none can reverently bar his title, to whom the whole earth belongs. Nor was this dispensing with the laws either of nature or nations; the procedure was adapted to the nature of the case. The Israelites, without divine authority, could not have indemnified themselves with justice, for the injuries they had received, and the services they had performed, during, at least, an hundred years severe servitude, under four kings; and from the uncle of the last, named Busris, of whom history gives the

* The Hebrew word certainly signifies, *petant, postulaverunt*.

† *Commodaverunt eis*.

very worst character, had, in the absence of Sesostris, experienced all the rigors of a most tyrannical government *. In taking from them what the Egyptians were willing to give, there could be neither fraud nor theft. But when the command of their maker was interposed, it was the duty of the Israelites to take and keep what was so given them, as their own.

As to their going out of Egypt at all, let it be, likewise, observed, that God had the same right to deliver them out of Pharaoh's hand, that he had to settle Canaan upon them, the distinguishing inheritance long before promised to their fathers. That he could do both, for the purposes of his own glory, and the good of mankind in general, none can be so madly impious as to deny. And after he had made this design known, as he frequently had, by many and signal miracles, it was a direct defiance of heaven to detain that people longer, to claim their service, or expect a restitution of what they had received. It is frenzy to dispute, whether the king of Egypt, or the King of Heaven and Earth, ought to be obeyed.

FINALLY, no ill use, the thing greatly apprehended by unbelievers, can possibly be made of such a precedent as this, by any honest man in his senses. If any man, or any nation, shall, at any time, shew such a commission for acting as the Jews did, we shall then chearfully acknowledge their claim; but not otherwise. If no such commission be ever pro-

* Voyez Rollin Hist. des Egypt. imprimé a Amster. p. 112.

duced,

duced, let none ridiculously think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

But when the command is given, that they should not think, that their behaviour is a precedent for other things which bear no resemblance to it.

DISSERTATION XXXV.

Of the Departure of the ISRAELITES from Egypt;
and PASSAGE through the RED-SEA.

EXODUS, XII, XIII, XIV, and XV.

IT has been said by unbelievers, who shall be nameless, that the Israelites, long before their departure, were formidable to those who held them in captivity, and, joined to a foreign enemy, could have made a conquest of the land, in which they were strangers; for which reason, *the Egyptians drove them out*. We shall, therefore, obviate this plea; and then proceed to the history.

ONE of the kings of Egypt indeed, perhaps Amenophis, or his predecessor on the throne, had said to his people, *if there falleth out any war, they may join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land*. This, it must be confessed, shews a dread on the part of the Egyptians, for their hard usage of those whom their fore-fathers had hospitably received into their country; but no design on the part of the Israelites. Their hostile neighbours were the Arabians and Ethiopians; the one on the east, and the other on the south; for, on the north
and

and west, Egypt, as has been said, was bounded by the Mediterranean, and the desert and burning sands of Lybia and Cyrene. From the former, there could be little danger, as the Israelites had built a chief town, and a fortress of the same name, by the king's orders, as well, we may suppose, to secure their own subjection, and prevent their flight, as to defend the kingdom on that quarter; and against the latter, we have been told, Moses went, and brought trophies and territories to the country that had given him birth. The fear of the Egyptians must, therefore, be ascribed to their own severity, and the knowledge they had of the divine promises; and, instead of *driving out the Israelites*, the plagues inflicted on themselves obliged them to resign the *favoured* people to the care of the Almighty, whose arm had been so signally stretched out to deliver, and receive them. Though, as in all other dispensations of this sort, preparation has, for the most part, been made, that people, it cannot be denied, were, by their numbers, in a capacity to encounter many difficulties, and achieve great things. Miracles are never wrought without absolute necessity; and when that necessity ceases, they are not to be expected, till other extraordinary occasions call for them.

THE history, therefore, informs us, that Moses drew out six hundred thousand men of war, besides women, old men, and young people under twenty years of age; and a *mixed multitude* with them, either proselytes, contractors in marriage, or persons who were willing to undergo all the dangers of a desert, for every delight under tyranny and oppression. Of all those

those classes, perhaps there were many among them. And the whole might amount to above three millions.

THE place of rendezvous were the plains of *Rameses*. These were in Goshen, at the extremity of Egypt, which lay nearest to Canaan. Here Jacob, and his sons, had their first settlement; and, notwithstanding the dispersion through the other provinces, their posterity had formed a large Hebrew colony; equal in numbers to some little kingdoms.

FROM thence, in a short time, Moses might have conducted them to the promised land: From the one kingdom to the other, there was only about three days journey. But fierce and war-like tribes of people lying on the way, men, accustomed to slavery, and emerging, as it were, from under Pharaoh's rod, could not be sufficiently courageous to oppose them; especially the vigorous efforts of the Canaanites, whom they openly professed to expel from their own land: And miracles were no oftner to be wrought for them, than difficulties occurred, which their own ingenuity and strength were unable to surmount. In their present circumstances, they could neither form, nor execute, the heroic design of resisting regular troops, or attacking places of defence. Besides, though this army should have had the courage, it is highly probable that they wanted arms for the enterprise. For the word *barneſſed*, by which some have thought the Israelites were fully equipped for their expedition, is yet so doubtful in the original, and the attempts of erudition * to fix it's true meaning so

* Calmet in Exod. xiii. 18. p. 140,

fruitless,

fruitless, that if evidence be insisted on for what we believe, we must still remain ignorant of this matter, after all our researches. As they extorted nothing from their oppressors, there is a strong presumption that they were not armed: And to have put them in a condition to act either offensively or defensively, would have been inconsistent with the policy of the kingdom. Indeed, as the dead bodies of the Egyptians, who were swallowed up by the red-sea, were cast a-shore, it is very likely that their arms were conveyed there also: With these the Israelites might, afterwards, accoutre themselves, in a better manner than they were before.

THAT the courage necessary for the chosen people might be then formed, before they were put to the last proof of it, against that country which was destined for their possession; or, at least, that they might force a passage through their enemies by the way, and transmit a war-like spirit to their descendants; the Almighty, instead of leading them from the south, the situation of Egypt, towards the north, where Palæstine lay, ordered, therefore, a movement to the east, where there was a vast and inhospitable desert, forming the frontiers of Egypt on the side of Arabia-petræa, and affording many occasions for the display of his power. In their route, they came, first, to Succoth, which signifies *the city of tents**, though the reason is unknown. They travelled next to Etham, the last town in ancient Egypt, and the situation of which has been examined lately, by a person of great learning†. Here they described several windings in their course, and came at last, to an opening in a chain of moun-

* M. Saurin, Disc. xlix. p. 94. † Dr. Shaw.

ains, called *Pi-ha-chiroth*, that is, *the mouth*, or cliff, of the mountains of *Hi-och*. Here, it is to be observed, that all the names in this part of the journey being Hebrew, the Israelites were, undoubtedly, the authors of them, without any regard to those by which the places had been called before. But those names are of such significance, from a faculty in the ancient languages, some of which still exist, that we have the situation and quality of the place represented, in the very name given to it.

A MIRACULOUS phenomenon, dark on the one side, and luminous on the other; or different in substance as well as appearance, in the form of a column, was the guide of this *peculiar people*. When it was day, it directed them where they should go, and sheltered them from the intense heat of the sun; and shewed them their tract by night, when their march was necessary and proper. It obstructed, moreover, the view of their enemies; and was as the throne of God from whence they looked for counsel and protection. Moses says, *the angel of the Lord, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them*, when Pharaoh, and his army, approached; *and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them*: Or, in other words, as the angel moved, so did the cloud; the one being subservient to the other. Some Rabbins, who have followed all the extravagant flights of human fancy, and many others who have imitated them, have said, that this angel, or wall of fire between the Israelites and Egyptians, was Michael. While others, in all ages, who have attended more closely to the various dispensations of grace from heaven, have been of opinion, that the *Sole-burner*, or bright

bright shining light, mentioned particularly in early periods, was the son of God *, to whom the government of the world was specially committed. From this appearance, which was the symbol of the divine majesty, God is said to have conversed with Moses, and given him every necessary direction in this singular expedition.

MEANWHILE, the impression, which the late plagues had made on Pharaoh's mind, began to be fainter. By this time, he, and his servants knew, that the Israelites had undertaken their march with another view than that of celebrating a feast, in the wilderness: For when they let them go, they imposed on themselves by this notion †. They now reflected on the loss which the country must sustain, by such a diminution of it's inhabitants; and, perhaps, might still flatter themselves, that the power of the God of Israel, extensive as it had appeared to be, was yet limited, like that of the false deities.—The heathen theology, of which the Egyptians were believers and followers, assigned a district of operation to every one of their divinities: Some were thought to preside over the hills, and some over the vallies; as we see in the advice which the servants of the king of Syria gave him ‡.

DELUDED in some such manner as this, or merely to rectify his own mistake, Pharaoh took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them, and pursued after the children of Israel,

* See, again, Dissertation xvii. † If fraud, on the part of Moses and Aaron, should be urged in this matter, it may be answered, that, in telling only a part of the truth, they were guilty of no falsehood. See 1. Sam. xvi. 2. 5. ‡ 1 Kings xx. 23.

and overtook them, encamping by the sea, beside Pi-ha-bi-roth, over against Baal-zephon. On the nineteenth day of Nisan probably, when the three days mentioned were expired, Pharaoh left Zoan for this pursuit, and came within sight of the Israelites on the twentieth, towards evening. The distance from Succoth, where the latter had first stopt, to Etham, was only *eight* miles, and from thence to Pi-ha-hiroth, *sixteen*. Pharaoh's army, Josephus * says, consisted of seven hundred chariots, fifty thousand horse, and two hundred thousand foot, with shields. The sacred text itself, besides the account given above, informs us farther, that the Egyptians pursued after the Israelites, with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army. In such a situation, how great must the embarrassment of the fugitives have been! On the west, a chain of mountains! On the east and north, the sea! And Pharaoh's army, on the south! What part shall they chuse!—Cross the mountains!—they are inaccessible!—Pass over the sea!—they have neither mariners nor vessels!—Fight!—they want instruments of war, and skill to use them!—Let them turn their face, then, towards that cloud where their great leader resides, and put themselves under the shadow of his wings till this calamity is past. Let them call to their aid that invincible arm, which had hitherto supported them, and doth ever valiantly †.

THIS they neglected, and acted quite contrary. As Pharaoh would naturally say, the wilderness hath shut them in, when they were surrounded by the sea, and craggy mountains, which it was impossible to pass, and be thereby encouraged to attack them; the Isra-

* Antiquit. judaic. lib. ii. cap. vi.

† Psalm cxviii. 15. 16.
elites

elites themselves condemned their captain for bringing them into such distresses. They murmured against Moses, and, in the most sarcastical and reproachful language, or rather full of discontent and rage, said, *because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us?*

IN the meekness of his soul, and the fullest expectation of assistance on this critical occasion, the man of God cried unto the Lord, who had directed him to take this course, instead of going from Etham round the Cape of the Red-sea; and received power and commandment to extricate his people from their present difficulties. *Lift up thy rod, said Jehovah, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the mid of the sea: And I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.*

GOD had brought the Israelites to a place, where, it strongly appeared, they were to fall victims to the highly incensed monarch of Egypt; but it was only to magnify his own power and justice in the destruction of Pharaoh, and the great men of his kingdom. All the former judgments upon their cattle, their corn, their bodies, and their children, were just chastisements for the wrongs which they had done to his people, and keeping them in undeserved bondage. But he had not yet called them to an exact account, for destroying so many male-infants of the Hebrews, as they had drowned in the river. For that innocent blood he reckons with them now, and made them

them the executioners of his vengeance upon themselves, by giving them up to their own proud presumptions of success, in pursuing those whom they lately besought to depart out of their land*. Infatuated resolution! Cruel oppressors, take warning! *Be wise, O ye kings: Be instructed, ye judges of the earth*†.

THAT Moses had the fullest expectation of assistance, appears from what he said to the people; *fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you to-day: For the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.* And having declared this revelation to them, he stilled their clamours, and banished their fears. Over the sea †, he, then, stretched out his rod, to which every thing was become obedient; and the waters were instantly parted asunder. *And, accordingly, the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left.*

THIS, indeed, may be thought hyperbolical, like the same expressions in the next chapter, where Moses, in his song, says, *the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the deeps*

* Bp. Patrick, in loco.

† Psalm 11. 10.

† Why this famous gulf is called the *Red-Sea*, the learned have laboured much to find out; but are not yet agreed. For the epithet *red*, the Hebrew word is *Suph*, which signifies a large rush, or flag; and, perhaps, this sea was thus distinguished, from those water plants, which grew in such abundance on its banks. From some other circumstance, therefore, it has been denominated *red*.—Perhaps, coral of that colour reflected from the bottom.

were congealed in the heart of the sea. Such descriptions, it has been said, are very allowable in poetry, as they magnify the power of God, who can do such wonders; though, in sober language, there is no necessity for supposing any other thing here, than an instantaneous revulsion of the waters into the Ocean, or caverns of the earth, at the divine command; when, the channel being left bare, hardened, and rendered solid by a strong east-wind, the Israelites might safely march over it for several leagues, to the opposite shore*. But, however prudent and philosophical this thought may be, to obviate the multiplication of miracles, it is not poetry alone, that we depend on, for this extraordinary march of the Israelites through the Red-Sea; but *sober history*, antecedent to that song, which informs us, *the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left*: And when a miracle is wrought at all, we need not wonder at the greatness of it. Without insisting on circumstances, with which we are, in a great measure, unacquainted, the heaven-protected people, under the guidance of the pillar of light, arrived on the other side of the gulf, before the rising of the sun: When the other part of the promise was, likewise, fulfilled.

PHARAOH, and his army, hot in pursuit, either, furiously, ventured on evident perils, or, blindfold, entered the watry domain, and were swallowed up by its returning waves. Moses, after the manner of human speech, says, *in the morning watch, the Lord looked, with a frown of disdain, unto the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their cha-*

* M. Saurin Disc. XLIX. p. 99.

riot wheels, that they drove them heavily; to give them a proper sense of their iniquity, and season for repentance; and they, accordingly, said, let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians. But Moses stretching forth his hand over the sea, it returned to its strength when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled against it; but the waters covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after the Israelites: There remained not so much as one of them.

THUS was proud Phero, and his mighty host, overthrown, by one of the greatest miracles that God ever wrought in favour of his chosen people. Perhaps it is the greatness of the miracle, that hath made some men be at such pains to sully the splendor, and lessen the dignity of it, by suggesting, artfully, the following objections.

THAT arising from the strength of the Israelites, has been answered at the beginning of the discourse: But the shortness of the time, in which all this is said to have happened, is thought to lay the foundation of an insuperable argument against it. Moses, it is true, allows no more than from the evening till the morning, which at the *Equinox*, when this transaction was, makes twelve hours. Perhaps, on due consideration, that space will be found sufficient for the march, even of the unwieldy body of Israel, over nine or ten miles of ground, especially if what is alledged by several Jewish writers be true, that they were divided into *twelve* parallel columns, according to the number of their tribes; which is, by no means, unlikely, as this division was observed on almost every other occa-

sion: Or only into *frue*, as the word *barnassed*, when they left Egypt, seems to signify in the original*.

THE passage through the Red-sea has been compared with sundry events recorded in profane history; particularly with what happened to Alexander, at the head of his Macedonians at the sea of Pamphylia, when he marched against the Persians; to Scipio at Carthage; to Lucullus at the river Euphrates; and to some others in later times. In regard to which, the poet's rule, never to introduce a god, unless something worthy of his power is to be effected, might serve as a sufficient answer, and discredits entirely the design of all such undertakings, by which no other purpose appears to have been served, but the gratification of unbounded ambition, and the extension of worldly empire. We shall, however, represent those events, in the order of time in which they happened, that the very nature of them may render any serious consideration needless.

THE Jewish historian himself lays the ground for the first comparison, where, after describing the passage over the Red-sea, he says, I have thus related what I find written in our sacred books: And none ought to think it impossible, that men who lived in the innocence and simplicity of the first ages, should have found out, for their own safety, a passage through the sea; whether it might have *opened of itself*, or been divided by the will of God; since the same thing happened long after to the Macedonians, under the command of Alexander, when God was pleased to make use of that nation in destroying the Persians.

* Heb. *וַיִּפְתָּח*. Sep. *apertum de ymas*. Vulg. *Armati*.

Thus.

DISSERTATION XXXV. 269

Thus all the historians, who have written of that prince, report; and I leave it to every one to judge as they please*.

Scipio, Livy says, at the conquest of Carthage, was told by some fishermen, that he might, with ease, carry his army, at low water, to the foot of the city walls. He took the hint; and about the middle of the day, the waters following their natural course, and a north wind, which sprung up at the same, driving them with the greater rapidity, the marsh, or bay, was so fordable, that the waters scarce went to the men's girdle, and only to the knees of some of them. But what wisdom and prudence thus effected, he endeavoured to make the people regard as a prodigy†.

PLUTARCH'S account of Lucullus is very similar. When, by long uninterrupted marches, he had arrived at the banks of the Euphrates, the winter rains and snow had so exceedingly swelled the stream, that the river was amazingly rapid and impetuous. This gave him great uneasiness; for he knew it would require much time to procure boats, and provide a bridge for the passage of his forces. But, towards the evening, the flood began to abate, and sunk so considerably that night, that the next morning he found the river, not only confined within it's original channel, but shallower than usual, insomuch that the people of the country, when they discovered several heads of land, like little islands rising above the waters, which seemed to stagnate round them, considered Lucullus as

* Josephus, Antiquit. judaic. lib. ii. cap. vii. † Vide Tit. Liv. lib. xxvi. cap. xlv.

some deity, who had wrought a miracle, and forced the river to submit, and yield him a safe and expeditious passage*.

IN the same list is placed what history relates of an event, which fell out an hundred and five years ago. The combined fleets of England and France, consisting of an hundred sail, threatened the coasts of Holland, and actually meditated a descent at the *Texel*. Forty-seven ships of war, twelve frigates, and twenty fire ships, under the command of Admiral *Ruyter*, were, humanly speaking, very inadequate to such a formidable armament against them. But the design of their enemies, says the historian, failed in a way most extraordinary. On the night when the attack was to have been made, the *ebb* lasted *twelve whole hours*, which the sailors considered as a miracle. This extraordinary reflux was, likewise, followed by a violent tempest, which totally disconcerted the enemy's fleet, and obliged those, who came hostilely against Holland, respectfully to leave coasts which providence defended in such a miraculous manner†.

SUCH are the arguments, used by ingenious and unbelieving men, for disparaging this greatest of all miracles, because it was the most public, and the least liable to the charge of illusion. The bounds prescribed for this work preclude a minute examination of those facts, when we might retrench what love for the marvellous hath added to the truth.

OF Alexander's expedition, whatever Josephus may have thought of it, Plutarch speaks very soberly.

* Plutarch. in vitâ Luculli. † Vie de l'amiral Ruiter, Liv. xii. Et aussi M. Saur. Disc. xlix. p. 108.

He says, his passage through Pamphylia has been very pompously described by historians, and represented, in the highest degree, marvellous and astonishing; as though, by some divine power, the waves which used to roll impetuously from the main, and hardly ever left the beach, under the steep broken cliffs, uncovered, had retired to afford him a passage. But Alexander, in his epistles, mentions no such extraordinary event, but only says, that in his march from Phaselis he went through the passage called Climax*. And Strabo's account is this: Near the city of Phaselis, between Lycia and Pamphylia, *there is a passage by the sea-side, through which Alexander marched his army. This passage is very narrow, and lies between the shore and the mountain Climax, which overlooks the Pamphylian Sea. It is dry at low water, so that travellers pass through it with safety; but when the sea is high it is all covered over. It was then the winter season, and Alexander, who depended much on his good fortune, was resolved to set out without staying till the floods were abated, so that his men were forced to march up to the middle in water*†. So fanciful a writer as Quintus Curtius, who embellishes all his narrations with circumstances partly true, and partly miraculous, deserves very little consideration; and yet even he allows, that, after a north wind had driven the waters into the capacious bed of the ocean, Alexander and his army went through *the shallows* of the Pamphylian gulf, under mount Climax, with the water almost to their middle†.

LIVY's account of Scipio's approach to the walls of Carthage is equally rational, as it plainly shews us, that

* Plutarch. in vita Alexandri. † Strabo lib. xiv. † Quint. Curt. lib. ii. p. 138. Edit. Hag. Comit. 1727.

course of the tide, and the situation of the sands about that city, were well known to the fishermen who had frequented the coast, and that the historian charges the conqueror with a *pious fraud*, with which he worked on the minds of the credulous*.

IN the passage of Lucullus over the Euphrates, Plutarch, also, is so far from insinuating a miracle, that he ascribes it to natural causes; and says the people of the country only considered him as some deity, who had forced the river to submit.

THE affair in Holland, however providential for the states, has nothing in it extraordinary: At the *Texel*, where the water is shallow, the tide is, often, seen not to return for *nine hours* †; when the wind is strong in a certain direction; and nothing is more common than violent storms on that coast. It was, nevertheless, pious in the *Dutch*, to celebrate with songs of praise to the Almighty, their seasonable deliverance; if flattering notions, that the favour of heaven was peculiarly confined to themselves, were not unreasonable, nor made them violate the dictates of universal justice.

BUT admitting all those relations to be true, in all their circumstances, there is not one of the events to be compared with the passage through the Red-sea, as we have it described. Besides, the prediction of Moses that it would happen, the rod he employed, the

* Hoc, cura ac ratione compertum, in prodigium ac deos vertens Scipio, qui ad transitum Romanis mare verterent et stagno auferrent, viaeque ante nunquam initas humano vestigio aperirent; Neptunum jubebat ducem itineris sequi, ac medio stagno evadere ad mœnia.

† Note on the margin of Saurin's Disc.

facility and quickness of the passage, the rashness of the enemy, and their tragical end, all concur in placing the event above every parallel; and nothing but an immoderate desire to depreciate the miracles recorded in the sacred history, could ever have raised any doubts concerning it. Its wonderfulness needs to be no objection: All the events which happened to that nation, whose history we are now writing, from the time the promises were made to Abraham, till they were all fulfilled, demonstrate that they were under a sovereign direction. There runs through the old testament, which contains the annals of the Jews, an indissoluble chain of facts, for fifteen hundred years, harmoniously framed, and forming a whole, of which no part can be wanted, while each supports and explains another.

BEFORE we conclude, let one objection more be considered; though it is as contemptible, as its author* was bitter against all religion, whatever. He says that Moses had a passage through the Red-sea in a way perfectly natural, by the help of second causes; for we read, in the account given by Moses himself, that *a strong east wind blew all that night, and made the sea dry land.* No doubt, by allowing that the event did really fall out, the infidel, by the circumstance which he introduces, meant to destroy the miracle, by comparing it with the other events which we have just now examined. But had he ever considered, that the most natural things become miraculous, when they obey at the time fixed, the voice of a man, whose doctrine depends upon their concurrence? That winds should blow, and make waters retire; that the sun, likewise,

* Spinoza, Tract. Theolog. Polit. cap. vi.

should

should one hour glare, by his beams, around us, and another be covered with clouds, are things perfectly natural: But, notwithstanding, if any one should make those winds blow at his command, and the sun shine, or hide himself, would not this prove, of itself, that what was natural at one time, was purely miraculous at another? Would it not be still more so, if it had *been foretold*, and at a time when it could be least *foreseen*, without a special revelation from the God of nature? *The passage, under our view, was facilitated by a wind; and Moses had foretold that the Jewish people should pass over the Red-sea in safety.* But how could he *foresee* that a wind would rise to harden the sands? God only, *whose word the stormy wind fulfills**, could make *the east wind blow on the earth*†, at his pleasure. This wind, I say, only facilitated the passage, by drying, and giving consistence to the muddy channel; it was not so much as the instrumental cause, to make the waters remove out of their ancient place; for these were divided, and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left; contrary to the course of nature, and the action of all winds that ever blew. And, as a farther confirmation of the miracle, as soon as *Moses, at God's command, stretched forth his hand over the sea, the sea returned to it's strength, and overthrew the Egyptians, and Israel saw them dead upon the sea-shore*; when they sung the inimitably sublime canticle in the chapter following.

NOR, of this amazing catastrophe, are we destitute of many testimonies, which strangely corroborate the account Moses himself has given, though much of the

* Psalm cxlviii. 8. † Job. xxxviii. 24.

fabulous is connected with true history. *Strabo*, depending on ancient histories from which he copied, says, there happened on the coast between Tyre and Ptolemais, one of the most wonderful things, and rarely seen at any other time. While the people of Ptolemais were engaged in battle with Sarpedon, the sea came upon them; and though they fled, with the utmost precipitation, the waters, by a violent influx of the waves, overwhelmed and destroyed them, in a variety of ways, and their bodies were found mixed with dead fishes*. Here the scholiast, on this place, observes, that what happened in the Idumean sea, is transferred to the Tyrian, and interpolated with many false circumstances. Sarpedon, he says, is ignorantly mistaken for a proper name; but, in Hebrew, *Sbarphaddon* signifies the captain of deliverance, a character well agreeing with that of Moses†.

ATHENÆUS relates almost the same history; still fictitious and deformed. I know, says he, that *Posidonius* the stoic has spoken of a multitude of fishes, when *Tryphon Apamensis* fought against Sarpedon, the general of *Demetrius*, at the city of Ptolemais. Sarpedon, shut up by the Mediterranean, retreated with his forces; while *Tryphon's* army, who had conquered him, directing their course by the sea-side, were instantly overtaken by a huge wave which rose aloft, and rushed upon the land, and every one drowned. The wave retiring, an immense heap of fishes was left with their dead bodies. Then Sarpedon's soldiers, hearing of the calamity, came to the place, and, sparing the corps of their vanquished enemies, carried

* *Strabo*, lib. xvi.† *Spicil. Jam.* p. 208.

away a great quantity of the fishes, and erected a trophy to Neptune in the suburbs of the city. These little stories of Strabo and Athenæus, the scholiast again remarks, do not altogether agree, as is evidently seen; and yet it is certain, that their relations are grounded on nothing else but the passage of the Israelites through the Red-sea; though it is basely and wickedly disguised †. Indeed had it been truly represented, and firmly believed, there would have been no such idolatry as was established in the most civilized nations; and where it was established, if the power of the supreme God had been acknowledged, Neptune, and every other creature of the imagination, would have been robbed of their offerings.

LAST of all, Diodorus gives a similar relation, less corrupted, in this manner. Among the Ichthyophagi, that is to say, those who fed on fishes, and lived by the western coast of the Red-sea, there was a tradition, preserved through many generations of their ancestors, that the sea formerly opened by a violent reflux; that it's very bottom appeared dry, and covered with verdure; that the waters divided themselves into two parts; but returned again with great fury, and united as before, in their natural state †. Here, certainly, we see the passage of the Israelites, not obscurely described, even by a profane historian. The event is said to have happened in the Arabian gulf itself, and many ages before the remembrance of those who reported it to Diodorus.

* Athen. lib. viii. cap. 2. † Spicil. Jam. ibid. † Diodor. Sicul. lib. iii.

HERE, then, is a miracle, which, all must confess,
 was wrought by the Almighty, in favour of his chosen
 people! This, in connection with others, almost
 equally great and conspicuous, performed by the mi-
 nistry of Moles, demonstrate, beyond gain saying, the
 mission and authority of that legislator to have been
 divine. Let unbelief, therefore, blush, *and all iniquity*
stop it's mouth.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XXXVI.

Of the ISRAELITES wanting Water in the Wilderness of *Sbur*; that of MARAH made sweet; QUAILS and MANNA cover their Camp.

EXODUS, XV, and XVI.

A CERTAIN writer* hath observed, that, in a great many instances, we must endeavour, in the best manner possible, to supply defects in the chronology of the scriptures. No term, says he, can be more ambiguous, than that which is used by the sacred historians, when they say, *And it came to pass, or, After these things.* This, he adds, is almost equally employed by them, to denote an instant, an hour, a day, a year, sometimes a whole age. The truth of the remark must be confessed, which the excellent author was far from designing as a censure; and every one will allow, that a few days make a very inconsiderable difference in the annals of the world. In profane historians, of ancient times, there is the same omission of dates.

* M. Saurin, Disc. L. p. 126.

BUT

BUT the difficulty here is not great. About a week may be supposed to have passed, from the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, till their arrival on the opposite shore of the Red-sea; *they came into the wilderness of Sin, on the fifteenth day of the second month; and on the first day of the third month, they came into the wilderness of Sinai.* Hence the particular incidents, now delineated, fall within the compass of thirty eight days; that is from the twenty-third of *Nisan*, till the first of *Sivan*, inclusive; *Ijar* having but twenty-nine days.

MARCHING from the sea, the Israelites travelled three days in the wilderness of *Sbur*, or, as it is called in the book of Numbers*, the wilderness of *Etbam*; which was the name of the whole country, that lies round the head, and the south and north sides of the Red-sea. This perfectly obviates the difficulty in the account, that *they encamped in Etbam, in the edge of the wilderness*, the day before they came to the sea, and were still in that wilderness after their passage through it; which has induced some to think, that the Israelites did not go quite a-cross the gulf; but, after forming a semicircle, came out at the same side, on which they entered it: A conceit, which, besides being injurious to the miracle, is grounded on ignorance, that the vast desert mentioned enclosed the Red-sea on all sides, as well towards Arabia as Egypt. In this part of the wilderness, they were severely scorched by the sun, and had almost perished for want of water. The historian makes their next encampment to have been at *Marab*, which afforded them a supply of that element; but they could not drink of it, for it's bitter-

* Numb. xxxiii. 8.

ness;

ness; occasioned, perhaps, by its running through rich beds of nitre, very common in those countries, and giving the water a very offensive smell and taste. The situation of this place cannot be geographically ascertained; as the name was accidentally given it by the Israelites, on account of the circumstance now mentioned; but is supposed to have been near that, where Hagar, with her son Ishmael, was in the same distress for water, that they had been before they came to Marah. Like her, they ought to have *wept*, in supplications for relief, from him in whose hand is the life and breath of man, and that he would quench their thirst, with a wholesome and refreshing stream in those sultry regions. But, instead of recurring to an omnipotent and gracious providence, *the people murmured against Moses*, who *cried unto the Lord*; and, though their distrust might have provoked the divine resentment, his prayers were effectual on the pressing occasion. *The Lord shewed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.*

• HERE some difficulties occur. What this tree was, we are not told. The *Jews* say, it was of a bitter taste; which might be the case, to heighten the miracle. Others are of opinion, that it had in it a natural quality to sweeten the waters; as *Pliny*, in some instances, shews. The first insist, that the effect was produced by the power of God alone; and the second think, that the divine interposition went no farther, than directing Moses, immediately, to the tree which could produce it. The side must now be taken, to which we chuse to incline. *Pliny's* testimony, in many natural experiments, is acknowledged to have little credit with the learned; and trees, plants and minerals,

minerals, which he might have discovered, possessing the virtue of changing the taste of a small vessel of water, can never be reasonably supposed to have sweetened a stream, at which many thousands quenched their thirst. Nor can the act of *Elisba*, who purified the springs at Jericho, by casting into them a cruise of salt*, be urged on this occasion. Though he used that expedient, at the time specified, it could never have preserved those springs sweet for any long space of time, as we find it did; much less removed barrenness from the soil, and prevented death by it's unhealthfulness, an effect likewise ascribed to this act: And the prophet's command, to *bring a new cruise, and salt therein*, was, evidently, designed to shew the men of the city, that the *cure* was miraculously performed by the power of God, and not by that of the small portion of salt which he then applied. When a divine agency is concerned, the simplest means are sufficient. The *spittle and clay*, which our blessed Lord applied to the eyes of a blind man, could not possibly have a more natural tendency to restore the strength and perfection of the optic nerve, than any other substance of the most indifferent kind. The waters of *Marab* were, therefore, sweetened by that power alone which commands all nature; and sometimes pursues methods, for his own purposes, which appear to us the most unfit and repugnant.

THE first covenant which God made with his people, after he had redeemed them from the power of their enemies, was at this place. Such a sensible miracle performed in their sight, added to that of their passage through the Red-sea, was an evident proof of

* ii Kings ii. 21.

the Almighty's care and protection; and an engagement, on the part of the Israelites, to fidelity and obedience. Here it is, accordingly, said, God *proved them*, or tried the ingenuity and sincerity of their hearts; and required by a *statute and an ordinance*, that, in remembrance of what he had done, they should *diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord their God, and do that which was right in his sight, and keep his commandments.*

SOME commentators* are of opinion, that, for their more regular government, God now gave that people a few rules to be observed for the present, till he should more fully declare his will to them from Mount Sinai. The Jews, depending upon a very ancient tradition, reduce them to two in number; of which a certain Rabbi gives this account: It appears, says he, from the scripture, and quotes Jeremiah †, and from the Cabbala also, that the first precept which God gave us, after we came out of Egypt, was not concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices; but it was that given us at Marah, *If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God*; where he gave us a statute and a judgment. And it is a certain tradition, that *the statute* was the Sabbath; and *the judgement* was the taking away all iniquity ‡. That is to say, to do justice;

* Bp. Patrick, in loco. † Jeremiah y. 12. v. 19. ‡ Constat ex scriptura & ex cabbala simul, quod principium præceptorum nobis datorum non sint verba de Holocaustis & Sacrificiis. Nec enim opus est, ut ullo modo defatiges intellectum tuum in Paschate Ægypti; illa autem, de quibus hic agitur, fuerunt præcepta post exitum ex Ægypto. Primum nunc præceptum, quod post exitum datum est, fuit illud, quod in Mara accepimus.

justice; and, especially, as some explain it, to honour parents.

FROM Marah the Israelites marched to *Elim*, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees, and they encamped there by the waters. This movement, made by the direction of a kind providence, or by mere human wisdom, together with the circumstances of the place where they now pitched their tents, several of the Jews have represented and applied very fancifully. They have said, that the twelve wells of water were designed to correspond to the number of the twelve tribes; the seventy palm-trees to that of the elders of Israel; that each tribe, accordingly, pitched their tents round one of those fountains; and the seventy elders sat under the shadow of the trees; and that a marvellous strange bird, as big as an eagle, of various colours, and a most sweet voice, appeared to them on this occasion*. But this is all the work of the imagination; and there is, probably, an error in the computation of time: For there is little reason to think, that the high court of the elders was yet constituted; and, besides, a celebrated critic is of opinion, that the Hebrew text may be read, *the children of Israel came to the forests*†. The name, which signifies *Rams*, intimates that there was good

Ibi posuit ei Statutum & Judicium. Statutum itaque, cujus ibi mentio fit, est Sabbathum; Præceptum verò, sunt judicia, sublatio nempe omnis iniquitatis. Volo dicere, fides opinionum verarum, ut novitatis mundi, &c. Deinde præter fidem hanc opinionum verarum, sublatio iniquitatis inter homines. Maimon. More. Nevoch. par. iii. cap. xxxii. p. 436.

* Hierus. Targ. Paraph. Jonath. Ezek. Trag. † Bocharti Hieroz. pars. i. lib. ii. cap. xviii.

pasture there; and likewise plenty of water, which nourished and moistened the grass.

THOSE, again, who are fond of allegory, will find in the writings of the fathers the fullest satisfaction on this, and similar passages of the scriptures. Some of them alledge, that the wood which sweetened the waters at Marah was an emblem of the cross of Christ, which sweetens the bitter ingredients of human life; that the twelve fountains of water at Elim were figures of his apostles; and that the threescore and ten palm-trees represented the seventy disciples, who were sent out to preach the gospel among the *Jews* *. After this sort, have men of false taste, in all ages, wrested the plainest passages of the word of God, to serve purposes which were never intended. For their use this work is not calculated.

AFTER their departure from Elim, there is a defect here in the history; which may, however, be supplied from a passage in the book of Numbers †, where we are told, that *the children of Israel removed from Elim, and encamped by the red-sea*; that is, near an arm, or bay of it, where it shot eastward, and fell in on the land, whither their course was directed. The reason why Moses omits this station may be, that nothing remarkable happened at it. Some have thought they now went backwards, as they came to the Red-sea again; but this was by no means the case: Though, it must be confessed, they might have gone a nearer way to Horeb, than by turning so far to the south: And yet some important purposes may

* Tert. adver. Judæos, cap. xiii.

† Numb. xxxiii, 10.

have been served by this measure: Another sight, particularly of the Red-sea, might impress on their minds a deeper sense of their late wonderful deliverance. Several things might be inserted here from the Rab- bins, but they are no farther used in this work, than they illustrate the scriptures: And *Talmudical* fables are utterly rejected.

FROM this station, wherever it was, *the whole con- gregation of the children of Israel came, on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departing out of the land of Egypt, unto the wilderness of Sin.* Consequent- ly, at the last place they did not stay long. This wilderness is not to be confounded with that where *Miriam*, the prophetess, died. *In both the English and Hebrew Bibles*, the spelling is different.* The latter appears, moreover, to have been near *Kadesh†*, and not far from the *Salt Sea‡*, or the *dead-sea*, by some au- thors called the *asphaltite lake*.

THE ingratitude and distrust of the Israelites return- ed at this place, as soon as they were exposed to a new trial. Seeing the provisions, which they had carried with them out of their captivity, almost consumed, they regretted their departure from Egypt, as if it had been the most indulgent and delightful country to them. Though led immediately by the hand of the almighty, and many a time rescued and refreshed in a supernatural manner, that rebellious people then wished, that they had spent the remainder of their life under Pharaoh's oppressive *Iron Sceptre*. *Would to God*, said they, *we had died by the hand of the Lord*

* Exod. xvi, 1, thus pr. Numb. xx, 1, 10 † Numb. xx, 1.
‡ Numb. xxxiv, 3.

in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and did eat bread to the full: For ye, meaning Moses and Aaron, have brought us forth to this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. There might be a few pious men among them, but they could scarcely be discerned amidst the multitude, who magnified their former condition, that their present might appear the more miserable; though there was no danger of their perishing instantly when they had large flocks of cattle to feed them.

To excite their thankfulness once more, by removing this calamity, the Lord promised, not only to satisfy their wants, but their lusts also, at least for a certain time; and to furnish them constantly afterwards with what might be necessary for their support. Thus *will I prove this people, whether they will walk in my law, or no.* Moses and Aaron, the messengers of the divine will, accordingly informed them, that they should immediately see the Lord, or the bright cloud, which, it is probable, had removed to a greater distance from them than usual, because of their murmurings; but was now to approach their camp, and about to break forth in a glorious manner; and that in the very evening of the same day, they should have flesh to eat, and in the morning, bread to the full.

WHILE Aaron was yet speaking, the whole congregation of the children of Israel looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud; and from thence was repeated to Moses, what he had before delivered, perhaps in the audience of all the people: *At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread.*

The

THE divine promise was fulfilled: *At even their camp was covered* with creatures, distinguished by a word of an exceedingly difficult and ambiguous signification in the original*. The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and all the modern editors of the scriptures in every language, translate it *quails*; which are birds of game; and were vastly numerous in those parts of the world, as Josephus informs us†. But among all the Jews, he is the only person who has rendered the Hebrew word *quails*. The rest of them either retain the original term, or make it stand for another thing than that kind of fowl. None of their descriptions, however, agree with the account which Moses gives in the book of Numbers‡, nor with any winged animal that we know, except a kind of *locusts*; very different from those which annoyed Egypt; and with which the Arabic and Persian gulfs abounded§. When we come forward to the passage in that book, where the phenomenon is most minutely represented, this subject may be treated at greater length.

HERE it will be said, that, of whatever kind those creatures were, there could be no miracle, as they are confessed to have been so plenty, and as it were peculiar to those regions. But it would be just as fair to alledge, that there was no divine interposition, when the great draught of fishes was taken, by casting the net as *Jesus* commanded, because the sea is their proper element, and contains them in shoals; or when *St. Peter* found a piece of money in the mouth of a fish, because it might have picked it up with it's food.

* Heb. *חֲסִידִים* † Josephus, lib. iii. cap. i. ‡ Numb. xi. 31. § Vide job. Ludolp. Dissert. de locustis.

For in all such cases, as has been said already, the miracle lies in adapting any thing instantaneously to the intended purpose and exigency.

BESIDES, though those regions be supposed to have been the chief resort of such creatures as the Israelites fed on, the production of such an infinite number of them must have been truly miraculous. They were not, indeed, supplied with them constantly, during their sojourning forty years in the wilderness; but in all cases of necessity they were sent to them; and at *Taberah*, the six hundred thousand men of war, and the whole mixt multitude that was among them, lived on them for a month at a time. And though we read in the seventy-eighth psalm, that when God sent them to their camp, he caused an east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power brought in the south-wind, that he might rain flesh upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea, this is not to be understood as a diminution or denial of the miracle, but an establishment of it in the most triumphant manner: This shews us clearly, that the powers of nature were employed in giving the miracle it's full effect, by driving those creatures from their recesses, and making them fall in the midst of the camp of Israel, and round about their habitations. It is impossible to think otherwise, if we believe what is recorded in the afore-cited passage. When that vast army murmured and wept for flesh, after an interruption in the falling of the quails, *Moses said unto the Lord, shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them. Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? Then the Lord, whose hand is never shortened, brought quails again*
from

from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. But those particulars shall all be examined in another place.

We shall now proceed to consider the *Manna*, that miraculous bread which fed the chosen people for full forty years of their pilgrimage, without ever failing them. The following is the account Moses gives of it: *In the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is Manna, for they wist not what it was.*

FROM this account two questions have been raised: The one respects the name given to this bread from heaven, and the other it's nature. On the former, the most ingenious efforts of criticism have been employed*, where there seems to be little necessity, and with as little success. Nothing can be plainer than the words themselves, and the connection makes their sense, if possible, still more obvious. Moses had promised that, in the morning, the Israelites should have bread to the full; but from what quarter, or of what quality, he had not informed them. *When the dew that lay round the host was gone up*; that is, partly melted to moisten the earth, and partly exhaled by the heat of the sun; they saw something entirely new, and, looking at one another, said, *What is this?* for they wist not what it was; or were as much at a loss to know, if this was the provision they had expected, as

* Vide Salmas. de manna. Critic. Sacr. M. Le Clerc.

how to judge of its quality. *And Moses said unto them: This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.* These facts and circumstances appear simple and natural. As for the name, which is made up of two words thus, *Man-hua*, the first Egyptian, and the second Hebrew, it evidently signifies, *What is this*, as by far the greatest part of the learned acknowledge. And by that name, or, as we spell it, *Manna*, the Jews ever afterwards called *this gift* from heaven; as one celebrated critic* hath thought the word likewise signified. And the Rabbins read, *This is the thing which the Lord hath prepared*†. But such interpretations are not warranted by the Hebrew text.

THE *Manna* was in small grains, like coriander seed, and the colour thereof, like the colour of *Bdellium*, a transparent pearl. It fell in the night with the dew, and the Israelites were obliged to gather it early in the morning, before the heat increased. An *omer*, containing between five and six pound weight‡, or something less than half a peck of our measure§, was the portion of each man. When covered from the sun, it appeared hard and solid, *was ground in mills, beat in mortars, baked in pans, and made into cakes*; and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. The quantity has been thought too great for each man's consumption. But it has been ingeniously observed, that the manna, as described by Moses, being of a globular figure, must needs have many empty spaces between every three or four grains, and those vacuities may be very reasonably estimated a third part of the vessels capacity. Being a

* M. Le Clerc in *Exod. xvi. 31.* † Vide *Critic. Sacr. Pol. Synop. Critic. in loco.* ‡ M. Saurin, *Disc. L.* § Bp. Patrick, in *loco.* Bp. Cumber. *Scrip. W. and M.*

light food, it must likewise be porous, and of a spongy contexture of parts. Besides, it would be wasted, in dressing, by the fire. Consequently three *quarts*, the *tenth of an Ephab*, might, probably, be reduced to three *pints* of an oily liquid substance; a quantity no way extraordinary in an hungry desert. And, if this reasoning be not conclusive, and we must allow that they had too much, we may see the design of this abundance was to unite them all together, by a proper sense of their mutual wants and necessities: When they were sick, and unable to gather for themselves, they depended on the health and beneficence of others. St. Paul, evidently, alludes to this very case, when he exhorts the Corinthians to charity; *let your abundance be a supply for the wants of others, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality. As it is written, he that had gathered much, had nothing over; and he that had gathered little, had no lack**. Children would receive from their parents, the weak from the strong, and the robust and industrious would have the more for their labour, by gathering an *omer* for every person in the camp.

THAT the production of this bread was miraculous we can no more doubt, than with respect to that of the *quails*. Common manna, by some ignorantly confounded with this, every one knows, is a gum, produced from two different trees, but which are of the same genus, being both varieties of the *alb*; and that the finest manna of all is that which oozes naturally out of the leaves in *August* †. But from the na-

* ii. Corinth. viii. 14. 15. † Johnson. Hill. *Ornus*; *Fraxinus rotundiore folio, et fraxinus humilior minore et tenuiore folio.* Lewis.

ture, circumstances and properties of this manna, every particular related of that which fed the Israelites, is different. For instead of exuding from trees, the manna in the wilderness fell, immediately after the dew, out of the air, where it had been *prepared*, as some of the Rabbins very properly observe, and in such innumerable globules as were sufficient for the sustenance of that vast multitude which marched to Canaan. Instead of adhering to the fingers in handling it, as common manna does, in its most solid form, this became an hard body, and required the greatest force to break it. Instead of continuing fresh for a great number of years, the property of the other, the manna in the desert soon grew putrid, and a receptacle for worms. Instead of having a physical quality, it had the power of giving nourishment and strength. Instead of being found mature and fit for use, during one or two months of the year *only*, as is said to be the case with common manna, that, of which we are now speaking, was fresh, good and plenty every day of the year, except the *seventh* of every week; but on the *sixth* there was a double portion; which is truly another miracle of itself. Hence, without difficulty, we may pronounce the manna given to the Israelites altogether miraculous and supernatural; as it was altogether different from any thing ever known, before or since, in that, or any other part of the world. Indeed so sensible were they of this themselves who saw it, and their posterity after them, that, we are told, they anathematized all who were of a contrary opinion. And, that there might be always in the Jewish republic an authentic monument of this miraculous food, *Moses commanded an omer of manna to be put into a pot,*

a pot, and laid up before the Lord, that is, before the testimony, to be kept for all generations.

THUS were the sons of Jacob provided with flesh, by an heavenly direction, and a sky prepared bread, for forty years, in their way to the land of promise. For we read, *when the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, at the end of forty years, and kept the Pass-over on the fourteenth day of the month at even, in the plains of Jericho; that they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Pass-over, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the self-same day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land, neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year*.* This, however, does not mean that they tasted no flesh of cattle, or bread of corn, during that space of time; for when they offered sacrifices, and celebrated feasts, they partook of certain portions of the beasts and of the cakes which were used; especially at the Pass-over; as we see in several passages of the following books. But all this, in the immediate service and worship of God, was so inconsiderable, as to be but a small part of their constant subsistence. We may, therefore, say that their whole dependence, for meat and drink, was upon a continual miracle which the Almighty performed for them.

OF such a miracle, indeed, we have no similar instance in the history of Providence. That wrought for Elijah is, by no means, equal to it. And yet, if we maturely consider the ends to be answered by this dispensation, our wonder will be lessened; or rather,

* Joshua, v, 10.

considering

considering the daily course of Providence, in other respects, it may be greatly raised. For what but incessant exertions of divine power, wisdom and liberality, afford the protection which every moment we receive, and the gifts, from unseen sources, which render our lives comfortable and happy, through the wilderness of this world, to *the rest remaining for the people of God?* Though things are produced by a natural process, and we know some of the laws by which they are perpetually governed, the first establishment of those laws was, nevertheless, as great a miracle, as if we should see flesh for hourly nourishment, and *our daily bread*, falling out of the clouds before us. In both cases, it is equally the operation of the hand that formed us, and *preserves our soul in life* *. *God causeth the grass to grow for cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the ground: And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oyl to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.* †.

* Psalm lxvi, 9.

† Psalm civ, 14, 15.

DISSERTATION XXXVII.

Of the murmuring for Water at REPHIDIM; war with AMALEK; and the salutation and counsel of JETHRO.

EXODUS, XVII, and XVIII,

MOSES, having fully related what passed at Sin, carries us next to Rephidim, and omits here two encampments which he mentions in the book of Numbers*, the one in Dophkah, and the other in Alush. We cannot but observe, that the historian's design in that book, is very different from what he proposes in this of Exodus. Here, his intention was, briefly, to collect all the great events which fell out to the Israelites in their journey in general; whereas, in the book of Numbers, he hath given a compleat description of their whole course. Hence it is, that in Exodus notice is taken of about *fifteen* of their stations only, and so many as *forty-two* are marked out afterwards.

THE encampment at Rephidim was distinguished by two memorable occurrences. The first was the murmuring of the Israelites for want of water, in the same manner as they had found none in the wilderness of Shur, and the miracle God again wrought to supply this want. He commanded Moses to take the

* Numb. xxxiii, 12, 13.

same rod with which he had smitten the river of Egypt, and turned it into blood, or the Red-sea as some understand it, and strike the rock of Horeb, and immediately a fresh and copious stream issued forth *in the sight of the elders of Israel*. The second was the war with the Amalekites, in which that people was defeated. Of the first miracle we shall say nothing more in this place, having every where presented to us the murmurings of the Jewish people, and God's mercies to them; and shall have alike instance to examine in the book of Numbers, when both together may be considered more successfully in conjunction, than taken separately. To the second, therefore, we shall immediately proceed.

If we had an exact ancient map of that part of the wilderness which is called Rephidim, and had better information of the territories of Amalek, reflections on this passage of the sacred history might be more particular and satisfactory. But so far from being able to give perfect memoirs on this occasion, we do not so much as know, whether Amalek was only some eminent *person*, like the head of a numerous tribe, or household; or a kingdom considerably extensive and powerful, containing many petty princes, and their dependants, under one great and sovereign head. We are inclined to think the boundaries, under that name, were not narrow, nor the people within them unwarlike, or few. See what interpreters have collected, and is most generally received among them, on this subject.

In the book of Genesis we find an Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, and of a concubine called Timna,
the

the grand-son of Edom, or Esau *. We may, therefore, with the greatest reason, suppose, that he was the chief, and founder of the kingdom of the Amalekites. It is true, we hear of this name as early as the days of Abraham, long before Eliphaz himself was born †. But it is no uncommon thing in holy writ, to give names to places by which they were known only in future periods.

THE country of the Amalekites was, between the southern frontiers of Idumea, and the coasts of the Red-sea. They have sometimes been called Phœnicians, because they lay on the borders of their country, to the west or north-west of Arabia Petræa. This was the first people the Israelites found on their journey. As they were descended from Esau, they might possibly retain some of the hatred which he had borne toward his brother Jacob, and have the same aversion to the Israelites that the Idumeans had, from whom we must distinguish them. The Jewish doctors were of this opinion: *When, say they, our people had passed the Red-sea, they were attacked by wicked Amalek, who hated them, because of the birth-right which Jacob had taken from Esau ‡.*

To stop the Israelites in their march, was the design which the Amalekites had formed. Having watched their route, and suffered the advanced guard to pass them, they fell upon the hindmost of them, and smote all that were feeble, and faint and weary §. This partial attack soon brought on a general engagement. And as the Amalekites, by opposing the Jewish peo-

* Genesis, xxxvi, 10, 11, 12. † Genesis, xiv, 7. ‡ Targ. Hierosol. in Cant. Canticor. 11, 15. § Deut. xxv, 17, 18.

ple, opposed God himself who was their leader, they very soon experienced the truth of what, perhaps, had been before written *, *who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?* They came against Israel with a formidable army; the rabbins say † provided with enchantments, and employed against Moses the same art which they thought that legislator had so successfully used in Egypt, and might make him triumph again in the fields of Rephidim. But *there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: According to this time, as on all other occasions, it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, what hath God wrought!* ‡

AGAINST this enemy Moses employed two things, action and prayer. The direction of the war he committed to Joshua the son of Nun, whose future victories were so great, that they acquired for him the name, which signifies *deliverer*. He took on himself the duty of prayer, with two other men whom he engaged in the pious office. One of them was Aaron his brother, and the other Hur, whose genealogy the history has omitted. The common opinion is, that he was the son of Caleb, husband of Miriam the sister of Aaron and Moses, father of Uri, and grandfather of the famous Bezaleel, of whom we read in the first book of Chronicles §. But some interpreters, who have admitted that the Hur of whom we are now speaking, might be the husband of Miriam, have yet doubted if he was the Hur mentioned in the last named book, for reasons which it is of no importance to relate. It is most certain, that he was a person of

* Job, ix, 4. † Jarchi in Exod. xvii, 8, 2. ‡ Numb. xxiij, 23. § 1 Chron. 11, 19, 20.

great eminence for wisdom and piety, as Moses made him his companion at this time, and afterwards left him with Aaron to judge the people, when he himself went up to Mount Sinai to receive laws from God *.

Though it was indispensable in Moses to join the maxims of human policy with religious duties, as it is from the union of these two things alone that we can promise ourselves success in our undertakings, God, however, so ordered it on this occasion, that the event of the battle should depend upon his prayers, and not on his prudence or authority. From the top of the hill, where he was with those two holy men, he could see the order of the army, the prowess and skill of the commanders, and instruct them, by signals, where to charge with the greatest prospect of advantage. On the other hand, the people could see Moses; and animated by that marvellous rod which he held in his hand, and which had already wrought such great wonders, they would fight with intrepidity, and promise themselves an infallible victory.

BUT however powerful the efforts of Israel were, they prevailed only so long as Moses held up his hands to heaven; when they were let down, Amalek turned the battle. The conflict continuing, and *the flesh weak when the spirit was very willing*, Aaron and Hur, therefore, to assist infirmities, *stayed up his hands*, and kept them steady until the going down of the sun: When, by this concurrence of prayer and de-

* Exod. xxiv, 14.

pendence, of faith and action, Israel conquered, and Amalek was put to flight.

INSTRUCTIVE lesson to all mankind! Example worthy of imitation! To pray with effect, we must pray with perseverance. Sometimes, indeed, God prevents our requests, agreeable to his own promise; *before my people call, I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking, I will hear* *. But sometimes, also, he hides himself, to increase the value of his favours, and proportion them to our capacity, who are too apt to despise what we acquire with ease, and esteem nothing, as we ought, till it has cost us much pain. But how difficult is it to keep the mind, for a long time, so stretched and intent as prayer requires! The hands of Moses were supported by Hur and Aaron! Nor is the soul of man without it's supports when devotion is ready to languish. Sometimes the hope of obtaining; sometimes the fear of losing; now the expectation of renewed grace; then gratitude for favours already received; these passions and affections, alternately rising, excite and animate the believer, and keep him from being *weary or faint in his mind*.

SUCH reflections as these seem to be more just, as well as more useful, than those which many of the mystics have deduced, from this example of the man of God. They have enquired in what position he held his hands, whether joined, or cross-wise, and been very positive in their applications of this sort †. And a certain Jew hath not been more happy in allegorizing this subject. He pretends that God designed to

Isaiah lxx. 24.

† Tertul. cont. marc. lib. iii. cap. xviii. Just. Martyr. cum. Tryp.

signify by this circumstance, that the Amalekites had their inheritance upon the earth, but the Israelites fought theirs in heaven; and that as heaven is superior to the earth, the Israelites were to be the conquerors of their enemies*.

GOD commanded Moses to keep a faithful register of the victory which he had now obtained, and to rehearse it to Joshua, who was to be his successor, and enjoin him to *blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven*†. This command was afterwards repeated, and finally executed to the utmost extent, in the reigns of Saul and David‡. After their time no more mention is made of the Amalekites; If any of them remained, they were mixed, either with the Idumeans, or with other contiguous nations. Thus did the *parable of Balaam, which he took up when he looked on Amalek*, prove an important prediction; *Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever*§.

NOR is the hatred of the Jews against the Amalekites yet extinct. One of their canons declares, that they were commanded to destroy the very traces of that people, and to remember always their wicked and perfidious hostilities, which they had waged, with the utmost malice and force, against Israel||. And it is elsewhere said, that when the Messiah comes, the seed of Esau, and of Amalek, shall be utterly destroyed by the power of the Jews, which shall highly prevail over them**.

* Philo de vitâ Moses, lib. i. † Deut. xxv. 19. ‡ 1 Sam. xv. 8. 1 Chron. iv. 43. § Numb. xxiv. 20. || R. Maimon. in Mischna. ** R. Menach. in Exod. xvii. 14.

502 DISSERTATION XXXVII.

Moses built an altar to serve as a memorial of this victory. He does not say that he offered sacrifices on it, as *Josephus* in his third book has advanced. Of altars built, to perpetuate the remembrance of extraordinary occurrences, we have instances in the book of *Joshua*, and of the first and second *Samuel*.

THE inscription on that which Moses erected, on this occasion, was *JEHOVAH-nissi*; or the Lord is my banner. Hence it hath been ingeniously conjectured, that the heathens gave Bacchus the appellation of *Nysus*; and by substituting the name *Dio*, for *Jehovah*, they called him *Dionysus**; from *Jehovah-nissi*, the inscription of which we are now speaking.

THE historian likewise informs us that he said, in connection with this inscription, *Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation*. These words, thus translated, have no difficulty in them. But they are not agreeable to the original. The reading there, word for word, is, *Because the hand upon the throne of God, war of God against Amalek from generation to generation*. And more obscure than the text itself is the translation by the Septuagint, *Because God fights with an hidden hand against Amalek from age to age*. In the vulgate the words are thus rendered, *Because the band of the throne of God, and the war of the Lord, shall be against Amalek, from generation to generation*.

VARIOUS elucidations of this passage of holy writ have been attempted by learned and ingenious men.

* Bocharti Phaleg. lib. i. cap. xviii. Vide Diod. Sicul. in Biblioth. lib. iv. de origine Verbi Dionysii.

Because

Because *JAH*, and not *JEHOVAH*, follows *Kes*, which signifies *throne*, a very celebrated critic * supposes that the two words ought to be joined together; and says they would then express the last day of the month, on which this battle was fought, in the manner following; *This pillar was set up on the last day of the second month, to declare irreconcilable war with Amalek for ever.* But this has been thought too bold a conceit, and solidly confuted †. It is a more plausible conjecture, which is to be found in several authors, that *laying the hand on the throne*, was a form of swearing; as *touching the altar* was among some nations; or, as among ourselves, *laying the hand on the bible*; an outward character of inward sincerity, and of a solemn oath. Whence the poet ‡ says, *Abbeys touch the altars boldly without trembling.* There is, however, nothing in scripture to warrant this; and other interpretations appear more eligible.

THE most learned and laborious bishop of Ely adopts this reading; *Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the Lord*, that is, against God himself, therefore the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation §. This, indeed, is perfectly easy and natural, and consistent with the history. Because Amalek had affronted the divine majesty, in coming out and opposing God's design, who, in a visible, and most glorious manner, not unknown to the neighbouring nations, conducted the *Israelites* to the land which he had promised to give them, that king-

* Jos. Scalig. lib. iii. De Emend. Temp. † Theod. Hackspao, in difficil. loc. SS. Scrip. ‡ Intrepidus altaria tangere. Juv. Satyr. xiii. § Patrick in loco.

dom should be prosecuted by the effects of his displeasure, till it was totally destroyed.

ANOTHER learned commentator * hath offered an explanation, differing very little, in regard to the connection and propriety, from the former. Substituting one letter for another, he reads *Nes* instead of *Kes*, and, consequently, translates *ensign* or *banner* in place of *throne*. Then the sense will be this; *Because the band of Amalek is lifted against the Lord who is my banner, and to whom I have built an altar with this very inscription, there shall be war perpetually between Israel and Amalek.*

BUT it is now time to proceed to the salutation and counsel of Jethro. His daughter Moses had married during his sojourning in Midian, and carried with him out of that land, and his two sons by her, when he returned to Egypt: But, perhaps, at her own desire, *he had sent her back* to her father, at what period of time we cannot be certain; though, probably, it might either be, when both of them saw the troubles which were likely to arise in that country, before the Israelites could obtain their freedom; or immediately after his son's circumcision in the inn by the way.

HAVING heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, Jethro took Zipporah, and Gershom and Eliezer, and came into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God. This was Horeb, called the mount of God, from the divine appearances that were on it; and not far from Midian, as Moses, when he kept the flocks of his father-in-law, led them to that

* M. Le Clerc. in loco.

mountain.

mountain. And, by messengers, informing the law-giver, that he was come to him, with his wife, and his two sons, Moses went out to meet Jethro, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare: And they came into the tent.

THEIR future discourse accurately examined, and some other circumstances considered, may assist us in ascertaining a point, about which commentators have been strangely divided. It has been a subject of debate, at what time Jethro came from Midian, with his family; whether immediately after the war with Amalek, or some time after, when the affairs of the Israelites were better regulated. Two great men*, and many others, have been of opinion, that this visit was after the giving of the law on Sinai; though they are far from being agreed about the precise period, if it was near the end of the *first* year, or some time in the *second*. And another very learned man says, that the account is no other way to be received, than of a thing that happened after the promulgation of the decalogue†.

Now, can one reasonably suppose, that Jethro would not take the first opportunity to visit Moses, and to bring him and his nearest relations together, after he had heard of the departure from Egypt, and the passage through the Red-sea; the news of which could not but have reached him, who was a borderer upon this wilderness? What else could induce Moses to insert the circumstances of the visit, which was certainly made at one time or another, in this part of his

* Ussertius A. M. 2514. Dr. Lightfoot in loco. † Seld. lib. ii. de Syned.

general history, if that visit was not made in the order of time in which he relates it? Josephus closely follows him, without discovering the least doubt about the chronology. And what are the insuperable objections against our believing, that the event really happened at the season which seems here to be clearly fixed?

It has been argued, that this piece of sacred history ought to be inserted after the tenth verse of the tenth chapter of *Numbers*, because, at the twenty ninth verse, we read, after a description of the march from Sinai, that Moses requested *Hobab, the son of Raguel* the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law*, to accompany the chosen people through the wilderness, to the promised land: And this march began on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year. And Moses, moreover, in the first chapter of *Deuteronomy*, where he recapitulates past transactions, declares his appointment of the judges, whom Jethro advised him to constitute, to have been after the Lord had ordered them to depart from *Horeb*.

But all this certainly will have little weight, when we consider, that *Hobab* might visit Moses, at a place so near his own residence, several times after his father had returned home. And though we are informed, that Moses did follow Jethro's counsel, in regard to those judges, we are not told at what time he appointed them. It is by no means probable that he could do it, in the short space which intervened, between the

* Some have thought, that the priest of Midian had three names, *Reuel*, *Jethro*, and *Raguel*: But it is more probable, that *Reuel* was the father of *Jethro*, who was also called *Raguel*.

time when that counsel was given, and the publication of the law. What is alledged from the sixteenth verse of this chapter, where Moses acquaints his father-in-law, that he made the people, who came to him for justice in any matter, *know the statutes of God and his laws*; cannot deserve our regard, however seriously urged, as referring to the *statutes and laws* at Sinai; where we may be assured, if human prudence had not already pointed out the method, the Almighty would have given his servant proper directions about the administration of public justice, in the same manner as about every thing else. The *statutes and laws*, therefore, mentioned in this place, we may presume, were nothing more than wise decisions by Moses, agreeable to *natural* justice, and, consequently, to the will and law of God.

In short, whoever considers the material parts of the conversation, between Moses and Jethro, with attention, must be of opinion, that the interview was in the order of time, as it is here set down. For, at this meeting, Moses only relates what God had done to *Pharaoh*, and to the *Egyptians*; how the Lord had *delivered them*; and *all the travel that came upon them by the way*: Which comprehends the plagues of Egypt, the passage through the Red-Sea, the scarcity of water and bread, and the battle with Amalek: Or all that had yet befallen the Israelites, and of which we read in the foregoing chapters. But if it had been subsequent to the publication of the covenant at *Sinai*, is it not very probable, nay absolutely certain, that he would have spoken of the most remarkable circumstances of all, God's glorious appearance to them on that

that *mount*, and the law, in it's vast extent, including all the parts of it, which he had delivered to them?

JETHRO rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel; and, blessing the Lord, confessed that he was greater than all God's. Being a priest, he also took a burnt-offering, and sacrifices for God; that is, to be offered to God; and having wholly consumed the former on the altar, no body ever partaking of it, Aaron, and all the elders of Israel, came to eat bread with Moses father-in-law before God: In the most solemn manner, they feasted on the peace-offerings which had been presented, of which all the worshippers at the sacrifice had, usually, their share*.

EITHER observing, or being informed, what insupportable pains Moses took in judging the people, this sagacious man, with the greatest modesty, gave him the most salutary counsel, and assured him, that it would receive the divine approbation, by the good success that should attend it. The wise institutions which he here recommends, are so plain in themselves, that we need not at present enlarge on them; especially as they will occur again, in places where the administration of civil justice, among the Jews, will require to be more minutely considered.

And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

* See Dissertation xxxiv. page 450.

DISSERTATION XXXVIII.

Of the encampment at **SINAI**; and the **SANCTIFICATION** of the Israelites, previous to the giving of the **LAW**.

EXODUS, XIX.

THE Israelites, immediately upon their murmuring for want of water, had moved from *Rephidim*, toward that part of the wilderness where *Horeb* stood; and yet seem to have returned thither again to fight with *Amalek*; and, afterward, to have been led, by the glorious cloud, to the other side of the mountain, which is called *Sinai*, where that bright appearance, the emblem of the divine majesty, rested.

THIS was on the first day of the third month, after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt; or forty-five days. Five more were spent in receiving messages, and preparing themselves to meet with God, before the Law was delivered. The Jews, therefore, ever since, observe *Pentecost*, as a memorial of that dispensation, *fifty days* after their Pass-over. Here, then, is a rule by which we may judge of the length of the months, mentioned in the writings of Moses. For, on the fifteenth day of March the Israelites departed from Egypt, and on the first day of the third month they came into the wilderness of *Sinai*; which makes it manifest, that their calculation of time almost corresponded with our own.

IN

IN relation to Palæstine this desert lay eastward, and was denominated from a chain of mountains which intersected it. St. Paul plainly tells us, that *Sinai is a mountain in Arabia**, whereof Horeb was one top, and a third conical rock, on one of the sides of it, another. The two former are now called, by the people of that country, Tur; and the latter, by modern geographers and travellers, St. Catherines†, where stands a building, possessed by Christian monks, for devotion, and the reception of Pilgrims.

ON Sinai, Moses was several times with God, who, *the first day*, commanded him to remind the Israelites of the favours which they had received from him, and of the great wonders which he had done in their behalf. He commanded him, likewise, to urge those miracles of grace and power, as motives of submission to his laws; and, moreover, to inform them, that this obedience was the condition of his Almighty protection and guidance in future, and of the continuance and increase of their felicity.

THAT Moses might have the most striking apprehensions, of the importance and justice of the covenant about to be proposed, the present situation was chosen by divine wisdom. He was now standing on a very lofty mountain, from whence he might view the course by which the Almighty had brought them out of Egypt, after many signs and wonders; the Red-sea, through which he had led them, by an unknown path; the desert, where he had sustained them, by a constant miracle; and the way to the land of promise,

* Galat. iv. 25.
Shaw's Travels, &c.

† Thevenot, *Voyage du Levant*. Dr.
the

the object of their desire and hope, into which he engaged to conduct them, by a *strong hand*, and an *outstretched arm*. The words, at the fourth verse, with which Moses was to begin the solemn transaction with the people, are full of significance and sublimity: *Ye have seen*, said he, *from the mouth of God, ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on Eagles wings, and brought you unto myself.* Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure* unto me, above all people; though all the earth be mine. And ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests*, and an *holy nation*.

THIS allusion to the strength, and wonderful affection, of that fowl to its young*, *I have carried you as on eagles wings*, is descriptive of the kind and safe protection which God had given to his people: In the same manner, *my peculiar treasure*, signifies, that they were as dear to the Almighty as things which are preserved with the greatest vigilance and care: And, finally, the promise, that they should be *unto him a kingdom of priests and an holy nation*, was calculated to excite in the Jews an exalted idea of the privileges which they should enjoy. For royalty, with which priests were antiently invested, implied, not only exemption from servitude, but also power; and, in all probability, there is a reference here to the custom established in Egypt, from whence the Israelites had immediately come; where the rights of the priests were permanent and inviolable, by a common law of the state, passed in the time of the famine, when Joseph purchased

* Vide, Bocharti Hieroz. p. 11, lib. 11, cap. v.

chased lands from all the rest of the Egyptians, and left the sacred inheritances untouched *.

THEIR obedience, as has been said, was the term of this favour; and, notwithstanding their rebellions, and the calumnies of an enemy, equally bitter against Judaism and Christianity †, a father of the church ‡ has proved, that this favour was, most effectually and extensively, shewn to the Jewish people, in the salutary and profitable laws given to them; by which they were early taught to know the true God, to believe the immortality of the soul, and the rewards and punishments in the life to come, and to condemn *divination*, with which mankind had been universally abused; together with a great many other things of the utmost importance.

MOSES now descended from the mountain, and, having assembled the chiefs of families, and the elders of the people, or the principal men among them, disclosed his message; when, as of one man, the voice was unanimous; *All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do.* Thus was Moses plainly, as St. Paul teaches us, *the Mediator* §, in this covenant.

THE next day he went up again to the mount, and, after reporting this answer of the people, received assurances, that the divinity of his mission should be established, among that very people who had the best opportunities of examining it. And herein lies the distinguishing difference between true prophets, and others who have imposed their pretences on vulgar

* M. Saurin, Disc. LII.
Seetz, in Lib. cont. Christ.

† Celsus Philosophus, Epicuri
‡ Origen. § Galat. iii, 19

belief.

belief. Impostors, founding new religions in the world, have, for the most part, affected converse with some deity; and, to conciliate respect to the laws they delivered, declared that they received them from heaven itself. In this manner acted Zoroaster, Lycurgus, Numa Pompilius, and Seleucus*; Mahomet also, and several others. And the legislation of Moses, in modern times, being treated with no higher respect, by undiscerning infidels; the very people who were, at first, to submit themselves to it, might have suspected its authority, after the knowledge they had of imposture in those early ages, if its blessed author had not provided some *critierions*, by which it might appear to come undeniably from himself. The Lord, therefore, told Moses, that a voice should be directed to him with such distinct words, and in the presence and hearing of so great a multitude, that not one of them should ever have room to doubt, that he was appointed by him to be his messenger to them. *A thick cloud*, it was likewise declared, should be the vehicle of the divine Majesty, that the people should not see the God of Israel, but might *bear when he spake with Moses, and believe him for ever*. This method was, accordingly, so efficacious, in all succeeding ages, to convince them of their prophet's integrity, that, in the very last periods of their constitution, we find the Jews acknowledging that they *knew God spake by Moses*†. And, on many occasions, voices from heaven were addressed to our blessed Saviour, for the same purpose, that his mission, in every other respect superior to that of Moses, might not be behind it in this very important circumstance‡.

* Plutarch, in eorum vitis. † St. John, ix, 29. ‡ St. Matthew, iii, 17, xvii, 5. St. John, xii, 28, &c.

PREVIOUS to the grand design, *The Lord said unto Moses, the third time he had been with him* *, *Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: For the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai.* This descent was to be from heaven, in a darker cloud than that which had hitherto conducted them, and from which some rays of a glorious majesty that was in it, were to break forth upon them, to strike them with greater awe. To prepare themselves for this appearance, the whole assembly was required to observe, with the greatest exactness, certain rites of abstinence and purification, that they might behold, without profanation, the august symbols of Jehovah's presence among them.

THE ceremonies ordained and practised, on this occasion, passed into standing laws among both the Jews and Gentiles, and were religiously observed by them ever after, when they were about to approach any divinity †. Washing clothes, cleansing the body carefully with water, fasting and devotion, and refraining from the most lawful things, when they might pollute or distract the mind, are acts of which history furnishes us with the longest train of examples.

MOSES was, likewise, commanded to place barriers round the sacred mount, the very extremities of which no man was to approach, that they might have a juster reverence for God. Transgression here was to be expiated by death. *Whoever toucheth the Mount, whe-*

* See verse 9. † Maimon. Mor. Nevoch. P. iii, Cap. xxxiii, Seld. de Syn. L. 1.

ther it be beast or man, he shall surely be stoned or shot through with a dart, he shall not live. The signal for leaving their camp, and coming to the foot of the mount, where they might more plainly hear the voice of God, was to be the protracted, or drawn-out sound of the trumpet, which would be less terrible, than when the blasts were shorter and broken. *And Moses came down from the Mount unto the people; and made them ready, agreeable to these instructions, against the third day.*

DISSERTATION XXXIX.

Of the giving of the LAW on SINAI.

EXODUS, XIX, and XX.

NOW the important day was come, and which is rendered for ever memorable, by the most pompous and terrible sights and sounds that ever affected the senses of mortals. God was exalted as on his throne, and had *thousands and thousands of angels**, to be the ready ministers of his grace or vengeance, about him. *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God, Sinai was moved at the presence of the God of Israel*†. Fear penetrated all the powers of a vast army; and Moses himself, who had been well accustomed to divine appearances, lost his fortitude, at the descent and summons of the divine Majesty.

BUT the circumstances of the *apparatus*, which accompanied the promulgation of the LAW, demand the minutest examination. *On the third day*, in the morning, after the command had been given to sanctify the people, *there were thunders and lightnings,*

* Psalm lxxviii, 17.

† Psalm lxxviii, 8.

DISSERTATION XXXIX. 517

and a thick cloud; from which flaming fire presently burst, so that the mountain could not be seen *; and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; or the heavenly ministers, who were attendants upon the *Schechinah*, made a sound like that of a trumpet, beyond what the force of human breath could produce. All these were tokens that God was approaching; irresistible incitements of the people's attention; and called them, authoritatively, to come and appear before him, and receive his commandments. Accordingly, when their trembling was abated, by the remission, we may suppose, of the tremendous sound, *Moses brought forth the people out of the camp, and they stood at the nether part of the mount*; that is, near the foot of it, but at a respectful distance, as they had been strictly enjoined.

Nothing could be seen on Sinai but *smoke*, mixed with flame, resembling a furnace, which burnt unto the midst of heaven †, or above all the lower regions of the air. But though *smoke and fire*, arising from gross materials, be, for the most part, inseparable, yet their concomitancy here is to be no otherwise understood, than that such appearances then affected the eyes of the Israelites. For, what is called *smoke* was, no doubt, the thick cloud, in which it appears, at the ninth and sixteenth verses, the *Schechinah* descended, and was entirely concealed; and the shining host of angels, was the appearance which they saw of fire, to which they are compared in the psalms ‡. And Moses himself expounds it in this manner; *He came with thousands of his holy ones, and from his hand went a fiery law for them* §.

* See verse 18.

§ Deut. xxxij. 2.

† Deut. iv. ii.

‡ Psalm civ. 4.

UNDER this exceeding weight of awful glory, the whole mount quaked greatly. The Almighty looked on the earth, and it trembled*. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder; by sudden blasts, transcending those that went before; not only the people trembled, but now it grew so very terrible, that Moses himself spake, and said, *I exceedingly fear and quake* †.

God then answered him by a voice; probably, by the voice of the trumpet, which might be made articulate, with the organs of speech, by the divine power; and bidding him not to be afraid, but prepare himself to come up to Sinai, when he received notice. And the Lord came down upon the mount: It was said before that he descended on it: The meaning, therefore, in this place, must be, that the Schechinah now settled on the top of the mount; or the highest part of it; that there might be the greatest distance between him and the people, who stood at the foot of it, when he spake to them. Moses, who stood below, though not so low as the people, was immediately called up, while darkness, splendors, thunderings and the trumpet, were in their full strength, to the presence of God; and, consequently, entered into the fire and smoke; or, into the cloud, and glittering company of the heavenly

* Psalm civ. 32. † Nisquam in vetere testamento legitur quid sit locutus: Sed Apostolus ad Hebræos xii. 21, id exprimit, dicens, adeo fuisse terribile visum quod apparet, ut molche diceret, expavescit sum et tremebundus. Vel adeo formidabile — *expavescit et contremisco*. Tremell. & Jun. nota in loc. visum, one sense substituted for another; very common in scripture. And all the people saw — the thunderings, and the noise of the trumpet. Exodus xx. 18.

inhabitants, with which the mountain was surrounded, upon God's appearance there*.

In such circumstances, and, independant of menaces, the limits of themselves were so venerable, there could not possibly be an Israelite, one would think, so presumptuous as to pass the prescribed bounds. Some of the people, however, when Moses disappeared, had either shewn some inclination to approach nearer, out of curiosity; or God, who knew their thoughts, anticipated their purpose. *And the Lord said unto Moses, go down, and charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, which come near unto the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.* Though God be infinitely gracious, and fury is not in him†; though he loves, and pities his creatures, as a father pitieth his children, yet he requires that they shall fear him‡. He is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him§. Who the priests were, of whose sanctification nothing was formerly mentioned, has been a matter of dispute among the learned; As Aaron and his sons were not yet consecrated. The most probable opinion is, that they were the prime and most honorable persons in the several tribes, who had also a share in the administration under Moses; and not the first born, by any special right which they had to the office**. They also were to be clean and holy, lest, otherwise, when they came near to sacrifice, the Lord should be offended;

* The story which the Persians tell of their Zoroaster, is certainly taken from this very passage of sacred writ. Vide Huet. Demon. Evang. † Isaiah lxvii. 4. ‡ Psalm ciii. 13.

§ Psalm lxxxiii. 7. ** Conrad. Pellican.

which

which supposes that they might approach *nearer* than the people.

MOSES thought this precaution needless, having given *all* a solemn charge, and *set bounds about the mount*, which he calls *sanctifying it*. But the Lord said unto him, *Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: But let not the priests and the people break through, to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them. So Moses went down unto the people, and delivered the message to them, and to the priests, as he had been directed; and, with Aaron his brother, returned to the mount, but not to the top of it, where he was before, as will appear in the proper place.*

WHEN every thing was settled for the great object in view, and during this scene of *terrible majesty*, except the sound of the trumpet perhaps, a voice, so great that all the people, who were amazingly numerous, distinctly heard it, came out of the midst of the *thick darkness and the fire*;—*And God spake all these words, saying,*—

I AM the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

I. THOU shalt have no other Gods before me.

II. THOU shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thy-

* Compare Exodus xx. 21. with Deuteronomy iv. 12. 33.

self to them, nor serve them : For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the father's upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me : And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

III. THOU shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain : For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. REMEMBER the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh-day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God : In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh-day : Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

V. HONOUR thy father and thy mother : That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. THOU shalt not kill.

VII. THOU shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. THOU shalt not steal.

IX. THOU shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. THOU

X Thou shalt not cover thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not cover thy neighbour's wife; nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

THE thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the smoke of the mountain, being continued, the people, as soon as the law was given, instantly removed, and stood afar off: From thence, they sent the heads of their tribes, and their elders* to Moses, who came near him, on the side of the mountain, which was his place, at the time of the foregoing revelation; and intreated him to speak with them for the future, and promised to bear him, but that God would not speak with them any more, lest they died. By the mouth of those messengers, he answered the people, that their lives were in no danger; that God only intended by this dreadful appearance to prove them; that they might have an awful sense of him in their minds, by having continually before them, the glory of his majesty, which had lately so much affected them; and that their only fear might be the offending him, by disobeying his commandments. But, agreeable to their own request, as he reminds them, in the recapitulation of those transactions†, *the Lord, in great condescension, heard the voice of your words, which ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of the people, which they have spoken unto thee: They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! Go say to them, get you into your tents*

Deuter. v. 23. † Deuter. v. 28. &c.

again.

again. But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess.—And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness, where God was.—

MANY of those commandments, and statutes, and judgments, were delivered at this very time, and are recorded in this, and the three following chapters. The rest, in his legation, were communicated during his forty days residence on the mount. Before that period commenced, he came and told the people all the words of the Lord, which he had then received; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord*. Which come not under our consideration here.

In this covenant, Moses was still the mediator, or rather represented the Almighty; and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, his two sons, and seventy of the elders, that is, of the principal men among the Israelites, personated the vast assembly. Those men were ordered to go up to the mount with Moses. This contract, therefore, was established on the side of the hill; and all the ceremonies anciently accompanying covenants, were duly observed. At the solemnization of fæderal engagements, in times of old, monuments of the promises were erected; sacrifices offered; declarations, by this act, virtually made, that the party violating submitted to death; and, lastly, there were feasts on the flesh of the victims†. At Sinai all these rites were performed. Moses set up twelve stones, which

* Exodus, xxiv. 3, 4. † Vide, Tit. Liv. L. 1. cap. xxiv. represented

represented the twelve sons, or tribes, of Jacob; built an altar, upon which, those who were appointed for the holy service, devoted burnt-offerings, and presented peace-offerings before the Lord: took blood and sprinkled part of it on the altar, which was instead of the throne of God, and part of it on the people, or their representatives; the book also, wherein were a few laws, he sprinkled, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words; and concluded the solemnity by eating and drinking, on the declivity of the mountain. And, besides these pactional rites, that it might appear, in the most illustrious manner, the Almighty was concerned in the treaty, he vouchsafed a sensible token of his presence. Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders, saw, as well as Moses, as it were the foot of a throne, composed of Sapphires stones, resembling the body of heaven in it's brightness; or the wide expanse of blue æther, bespangled with shining stars.

DISSERTA-

DISSERTATION XL.

REFLECTIONS on the foregoing DISSERTATION.

AFTER what we have now seen, and circumstantially considered, we are, as it were, forced to acknowledge, that the commission, by which Moses acted, was truly and evidently from God; and to declare unbelief, in this matter, to be blindness and infatuation. His first account of the great design, at his arrival in Egypt from Midian, and that he was appointed to be their deliverer and lawgiver, might, perhaps, be suspected by the Israelites, when he made the discovery; and doubtful to this day, without other testimonies than his own word. To convince every one, success itself in the enterprize might not have been sufficient; as this might, possibly, have been the effect of wisdom, power, and perseverance. But all following events in connection with the command and promise at the *burning bush*, concur to confirm our faith: *The plagues in Egypt; the passage through the Red-sea; the overthrow of Pharaoh, and his host; the waters of Marah made sweet; the quails, and the manna; and the crystal fountains of Horeb, opened with the touch of a rod; all those facts and certainties banish hesitation from the mind.* In very few, if in any, of those instances, could collusion with others,

or

or personal deceit, be of any avail: The whole relation, manifestly, supposes a power and superintendency beyond the privilege of any created being, uninvested with a special mission and authority from God. In short, when Moses is said, *to have done all these wonders in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of all Israel*, that God himself did them by him, is the sense in which all such sayings are literally to be understood.

BUT let us still add, to all those stupendous acts, the giving of the *law* on Sinai. The scene is pompous, majestic and terrible; exceeds the description and imagination, as far as it exceeds the contrivance and exhibition of mankind; and could only proceed from the eternal splendours, and divine magnificence of the Almighty, who is the KING OF GLORY, and the LORD OF HOSTS. All natural operations are excluded from the cloud, the lightnings, the thunderings, and the voices, which covered, and came from the holy mount. Moses was an astonished spectator, and heard, with exceeding fear, God speaking out of the midst of the fire, when he stood between the Lord and the people. And when he was called up to the mount, to receive the law on tables, he was commanded to take with him some of the Nobles, the great men, and of the best quality in Israel, that they might be witnesses of his entering into the place where the divine majesty appeared; and might also have some sight of it themselves.

HIM, that people could not, possibly, but regard with awe, as the servant of God, and honour with the readiest and most grateful obedience, who had been appointed

appointed by JEHOVAH to be their earthly *mediator*, and to conduct them to their *resting-place*. This they, accordingly, did; and their posterity after them, through all the periods of the Jewish church and common-wealth; and wherever the *sons of Jacob* are settled at this day, they, who have had the best opportunities of being convinced of his integrity, declare their belief, in the most public and resolute manner, that Moses was the prophet of God, to their nation. And while the record before us exists, the authenticity of which cannot be questioned, the law, and the circumstances of its delivery at Sinai, will stand in place of a thousand miracles, to prove that he had a divine commission, with confederate men, from one generation to another.

THE simplicity, excellence, and extent, together with the reasonableness and utility of the MORAL LAW in the *ten commandments*, it is neither proper nor necessary to set forth here: And this has been, often, diligently done by pious and learned men, for the benefit of the word, and not without success. One thing may be suggested, that the laws of those commandments bind every reasonable creature in the world, as they contain no more, in substance, than what was originally written on the consciences of all men; or delivered to our first parents in conferences with God; and ought to be explained and recommended to christians under the gospel, accompanied with other motives, and *established on better promises, under a better covenant* *.

FORMING a comparison between the two great dispensations represented in the scriptures, we will

* Heb. viii, 6.

find it obvious, that when the law was given by God, or by Moses to the people, the imagination was struck before the understanding was enlightened; the eyes and ears of men had terror presented to them, before their hearts were touched; and effects in their conscience, followed the most dreadful impressions made on their whole corporal frame: And, on the contrary, when the gospel-kingdom was opened, we find, that spiritual glory and power, so to speak, were displayed in the highest perfection; the blessed messenger of it deriving greatness and majesty from the divinity of his own person; the purity of his life; the excellence of his precepts and doctrines; the mildness of his invitations; the dignity and beneficence of his miracles; and the efficacy of his death; and which are all calculated to work on the minds of men, and improve them, without alarming or engaging the external senses. This difference is the ground of the following noble words, in the twelfth of the Hebrews; *Ye are not come unto the mount that might not be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard, intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to a. innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. That cried, for vengeance, from the ground**; this was shed for remission, and obtained eternal redemption for us†. And,

* Gen. iv, 10.

† Heb. ix, 12.

curfed.

curſed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But the righteouſneſs which is of faith ſpeaketh on this wiſe, If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart, that God raiſed him from the dead, depart, accordingly, from all iniquity† and look, and, by living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; prepare for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt ‡ thou ſhalt be ſaved. And may every ſinner count this a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acception ||.*

BEFORE we conclude, there are certain expreſſions, both in the old and new teſtament, which may be reviewed in this place, and adjusted to one another. The law, an evangelist ſays, was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt §. St. Stephen aſſerts, that the law was received by the diſpoſition of angels **. An apoſtle teaches, that it was ordained, delivered and confirmed, by angels, in the hands of a mediator ††; and that the goſpel was introduced into the world, by the miniſtry of the ſon of God: And on this doctrine reſts the ſtrength of his argument; If the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and every transgreſſion and diſobedience, of the law, received a juſt recompence of reward; how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ‡‡.

* Rom. x, 6, 9.

|| i Tim. 1, 15.

†† Gal. iii, 19.

† ii Tim. ii, 19.

§ St. John, 1, 17.

‡‡ Heb. ii, 2, 3.

‡ Titus, ii, 12, 13.

** Acts vii, 53.

Now in all this, when things are settled, and considered soundly, there is no sort of difficulty. For Moses was plainly, as we have seen, the mediator and manager of that law which proceeded from Sinai; and in no other sense has any one ever alledged or understood, that it was *given* by him. With regard to its promulgation *by the disposition of angels*, we know, that *God spake all the words of it*, from the midst of their host, who were *all ministering* to him, at that august ceremony. The law was, likewise, *ordained*, perhaps uttered after God, *by angels*; or, by the earthquake, the tempest, the lightning, and the thunder, they might render it more venerable; as the plagues that were in Egypt, though God sent them, are ascribed to their agency. From this circumstance, therefore, St. Paul's reasoning derives its force; that, instead of employing angels, or men, such as Moses and the prophets, who, in a certain sense, were angels also, that is, messengers, ambassadors, or servants, as he formerly did, in communicating and propagating his will to mankind, for the purposes of truth, righteousness, and piety; God hath now, more *openly* than ever, and literally *face to face*, spoken to them, under the gospel, in the very person of his own eternal and ever blessed son, whom, *whosoever hath seen, hath seen the father also**, who hid himself, from the people at Sinai, in the cloud and fire on the Mount.

THIS sense of those text is perfectly consistent with every other passage of scripture, and with the analogy of faith, and ought to excite in Christians the greatest care to *honour the son, even as they honour the father*†. For, if, after having despised all his other

* St. John, xiv, 9.

† St. John, v, 23.

DISSERTATION XL. 531

servants and messengers, we despise the son also, what can we expect from the Lord of the vineyard, but his heaviest wrath, and that our portion shall be with unbelievers*?

* St. Matthew, xxi, 33.

SECRETION

...and ...
...the ...
...the ...

